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THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE

by R. E. Gordon George

THE return of Mr. T. S. Eliot to the Republic in which he was born is an event for it. He goes, it is true, only to take up an appointment of a few months, but it is an appointment which means wide influence, and which will draw the attention of America to the significance of Mr. Eliot's career. It will arouse fresh interest in the influence he exerts in Europe: for with the possible exception of Edith Wharton, no American writer has more of the attention of influential leaders in Europe.

Thomas Stearns Eliot was born at St. Louis, Missouri, in 1888. He returned early to the home of his ancestors at Boston; his school was Milton. From there he went to Harvard, and, with a reputation among a small number as an extremely brilliant young man whose main occupation was culture, he appeared in Europe shortly before the War. But for one short visit fifteen years ago, he has not returned to his native Republic.

He has been the idol of a generation whose standards were revolutionary; he lives as a leader amongst the moderns who even tell us that we are living in an "Eliotite" age. But if he returns to America other than he left it, the changes in him are significant of more than mere novelty. This most modern of Americans has discovered that nothing is quite so up-to-date as the truth which is at the heart of Europe's life from age to age. He went away a republican; he goes back a monarchist. He went away an American citizen; he goes back a British subject. He went away an agnostic; he goes back a believer in Anglo-Catholicism. He went away unknown and without responsibilities, he goes back famous as a poet, a critic, and an editor; he is furthermore a director in a rising house of London publishers. Yet his position has never been exactly defined, and outside those who know him intimately no one could define it.

His first prose book, *The Sacred Wood,* was not widely read. Why should it be? It was not meant to be amusing; it propounded no new theory; it spoke with personal decision; it was extremely precise; it showed a careful scholar. But one could not say much more. Mr. Eliot owed his reputation not to it but to his poetry. His poetry was ex-

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tremely novel in its arrangement: its images were not surprising so much as startling, so dissimilar were the things thrown together, so abrupt the changes from the sordid to the exquisite. The poet showed in fact that he had the most original fancy; but the flights into the realms of fancy were from scenes as dull and ugly as the most vulgar districts of St. Louis or Boston: he was evidently determined to give a precise knowledge of extremely banal scenes, scenes in which the vulgarity was almost poignantly nasty. When one associated his fancy and his technical skill with this registration of repugnant things, it became clear that this poignancy was essential to his appreciation of life, and therefore the inspiration of this use of his fancy.

But it was not merely fanciful. Those who know Tom Eliot best know a very shrewd observer of life with an untiring sense of humour: he has a comic sense at once so droll and so acute that in all practical affairs he is one of the most prudent advisers that could be imagined, just as in the troubles of life he is one of the most sympathetic. The root of all this is his sincerity. One could hardly meet a man who looks more carefully at human life, and it is human life in the civilized world of today that absorbs his attention. But the civilized world of today, if one looks at it closely, does not consist merely in its novel outward characteristics; it is one with the generations out of which it grew, and especially with that close, almost overwhelming generation of the Victorian half of the nineteenth century, which spread much the same comfort and the same sordidness and finally the same *malaise* over America as over England. When one looks from Europe at the United States of today, they seem most of all an extension of England, an exaggerated England. There is the same wealth of the few, a wealth of freedom to develop into either vulgarity or culture; the same spreading sense of poverty in vulgar, dull, and repulsive things. And yet mingling with all this is the vast press of life, and essential to it is imagination's instinctive escape from it into those things of beauty, longed for by the soul and realized by it as images and visions of an unseen world which is the world of reality, and accepted as such throughout the centuries of adventure in which the European spirit (which comprehends the spirit of the American people) has long been engaged.

Thomas Stearns Eliot was born into the world of New England culture. His mother, Charlotte Eliot, had written a long and fine poem in blank verse, *Savonarola*. His family, strong in the sense of being central in the aristocracy of America, had only temporarily migrated to St. Louis. The great modern city gave one set of impressions; the cultured family another. And mingling with both was the broad even sweep of the Mississippi river as it found its channel through the prairie. Something of its monotony passed into the tones of the boy's voice: the only thing that now distinguishes it from the voice of the educated Englishman is that it displaces the ringing clearness of voices accustomed to give orders with the keen note which reminds one of the great plains and the river of the Middle West.

But though American society does not bring up one class to speak with an instinctive tone of authority, the sense of the preeminence of the best families is as strong among them as in any aristocracy of Europe. And in Eliot it was combined with a sense of the power of his own extraordinary brain. He writes prose with a slightly exaggerated emphasis on his own thought. He never hesitates to say "I". And it is just this strong

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sense of a person making his own observations with very distinct personal precision that marks his work. Between the culture of his family and the common scenes of American cities (as of English towns) there was a sharp contrast. Such contrasts are brutal to a sensitive man, and yet they are the very essence of comedy to a sane one. For comedy lies in the sense of our littleness, as tragedy insists on our greatness: and comedy outlines truth by surprising comparisons with little things, as poetry reveals truth by surprising similitudes with august and beautiful ones. Eliot found the august and beautiful, which were the instinct of his soul, always eluding him while his sensitiveness registered the immediate grime. Without it, how could one be sincere? Sincerity, therefore, meant suffering.

Only it was not suffering, or doubt, but a robust welcome to mechanical invention which dominated the end of the nineteenth century. To him that meant misery. And the keynote of the view of his sort is in a sentence in his little book on Dante. "Poetry not only must be found *through* suffering, but can find its material only *in* suffering. Everything else was cheerfulness, optimism and hopefulness; and these words stood for a great deal of what one hated in the nineteenth century." Suffering, in other words, is the soul's longing for escape from the world of false images not into a world of beautiful nonsense, but into a world of more thorough seeing. And yet, though the creations of man may be a lie, one cannot escape from man. One must look at life with the utmost care, and solve its mystery too.

"The poet's aim", wrote Eliot in *The Sacred Wood*, "is to state a vision." What was Eliot's vision? He had first a deep insight into mean streets. Take a beginning:

> The winter evening settles down
> With smells of steak in passage ways.
> Six o'clock.
> The burnt out ends of smoky days.

The rhymed iambics sketch out the hideous descent of nightfall on the slum. Then he essays the sunrise. Meredith has painted a sunrise:

> O bloom of dawn, breathed up from the gold sheaf,
> Held springing beneath Orient! that dost hang
> The space of dewdrops running over leaf.
>
> Of thee to say behold, has said adieu.
> But love remembers how the sky was green,
> And how the grasses glimmered lightest blue;
> How saint-like grey took fervour: how the screen
> Of cloud grew violet; how thy moment came
> Between a blush and flame.

But Eliot hated Meredith. His is another dawn:

> The morning comes to consciousness
> Of faint stale smells of beer
> From the sawdust trampled street
> With all its muddy feet that press
> To early coffee stands. . . .
>
> You tossed a blanket from the bed,
> You lay upon your back and waited:
> You dozed, and watched the night revealing
> The thousand sordid images
> Of which your soul was constituted:
> They flickered against the ceiling,
> And when all the world came back
> And the light crept up between the shutters
> And you heard the sparrows in the gutters,
> You had such a vision of the street
> As the street hardly understands.

Take in all its hideousness; look hard at the dingy shades, the blackened street, the short square fingers stuffing pipes, the area gates with the housemaids who live underground coming up to get a breath of smoky air for their damp souls; and with the detailed knowledge of that hideousness, you

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will know the piteousness. "Be thou me!" says the poet, for

> I am moved by fancies that are curled
> Around these images, and cling;
> The notion of some infinitely gentle,
> Infinitely suffering thing.

But there is no room for sentimentality: with poetry comes truth, and with truth comes cynicism, and after sensing that infinite suffering, face also the beastliness and

> Wipe your hands across your mouth and laugh.

So one comes in Eliot's leadership to the poetry of the contemporary street. It is not enough to look at a tawny chrysanthemum, at a beautiful girl singing as she runs up a street of Asolo, or at some outline of old roofs within the walled city against the evening sky. It is not some evanescent beauty in the frame, it is the deep consciousness of all that is implied by the hideousness itself which touches Eliot: Eliot, whose consciousness of it is blended echoes of great literature, and fairy fancies which stir instinctively from word to word. "The poet's mind", he said in *The Sacred Wood*, "is in fact a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases, images, which remain there until all the particles which can unite to form a new image are present together."

Let the tangled fringes of thought be left as they are; let the odd connections which serve to make the dream narrative be sufficient; let reason be content to give a hint of the lumber-room of unconsciousness before it sorts them out for what is at best a jumble sale: with so much concession to Freud and Joyce, Eliot can use a little rhyme and metre to make it all into a pattern, grotesque, beautiful, meaningless, pregnant, intense, and startling all in one:

> I grow old, . . . I grow old
> I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.
> Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?
> I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach.
> I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.
> I do not think that they will sing to me.
>
> I have seen them riding seaward on the waves,
> Combing the white hair of the waves blown back,
> When the wind blows the water white and black.
>
> We have lingered in the chambers of the sea,
> By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown
> Till human voices wake us, and we drown.

"What does it all mean?" the sane person asks. "Where is the sense? What connection is there in it all?" It is not so very difficult: old men often wear trousers with the ends rolled; once there were one or two who parted their hair behind; and they would hardly dare to take, like a child, a mouthful out of a peach. Did I say trousers? But that reminds me of the white flannels I wore on the seashore, on the beach—which rhymes with peach; and the beach and the waves make one think of mermaids, and mermaids make one think of girls' hair, and there is something like white hair in the water blown from the breaking waves, hair blown back from that wave that in the shadows turns from green to black. Just let me go on thinking like that. It's rather amusing, it all becomes an echo, a pattern; it can be most beautiful.

> in the chambers of the sea
> By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed. . . .

How that "E" echoes its beat! For Eliot is very conscious that poetry is pattern, above

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all a pattern of echoing sounds, each coming with a clash of surprise as the image itself is surprising. But since fancy is stifled by staleness, since modern life is confused, since the poet's temperament is intense, the classic patterns are eschewed, and a form is evolved which will suit the clear outlines of the novel, exact, and slightly morbid images. For Eliot does not escape from saw-dust restaurants with oyster shells to heath and woodland, Eden-sweet. His escape is either to an inward vision, or else to some world of fancy where things have a startling, baroque, and at the same time slightly comic, suggestion. The French would say *biscornu*. Let Eliot paint his Venice: it is a classic subject. Shakespeare has done it twice; Byron, Shelley, Browning have done it. In our own days Herbert Trench—"rich Venice riotous and human"—has done it, and William Force Stead—the banners floating "in the proud yet idle square". But Eliot peoples Venice with two American men, one a rich Jew, one a poor Yankee; an English Jew, and an exotic, doubtful, titled lady, whose "shuttered barge burnt on the water".

> The boatman smiles.
> Princess Volupine extends
> A meagre, blue-nailed, phthisic hand,
> To climb the water-stairs. Lights, lights,
> She entertains Sir Ferdinand
> Klein.

For since it is the sordid and grotesque from which, now by a colloquialism, now by a literary echo, now by oddness, this poet is to force beauty, the beauty itself will bear witness to the violence of the process, and be itself a supernatural or an eery thing. But grim, grotesque, ghastly as life is in sordid places to the sensitive soul, art can still simplify it into something rich and strange: for

> Voices are
> In the wind's singing
> More distant and more solemn
> Than a fading star.

And again, somewhere

> The nightingale
> Filled all the desert with inviolable voice,
> And still she cried, and still the world pursues,
> "Jug jug" to dirty ears.

Beyond all these rose in the poet a vision of the life that emerges from death, where though the tenderness and poignancy of love seems foiled by dead stone, yet somehow love survives because it supplicates.

> This is the dead land;
> This is cactus land;
> Here the stone images
> Are raised, here they receive
> The supplication of a dead man's hand
> Under the twinkle of a fading star.
> Is it like this
> In death's other kingdom?
> Waking alone
> At the hour when we are
> Trembling with tenderness,
> Lips that would kiss
> Form prayers to broken stone.

Such was the supplication in the last poem Eliot wrote before he became a Christian. He longed intensely for something that this world does not always give. Despair had clutched at substitutes for things intensely craved, and the substitutes led to intenser despair, mingling with intenser supplication. Such was the mood of *The Waste Land*. The last part of it was written in Switzerland, in a *pension*, after a nervous breakdown. It is a pathological document: it portrays a poet, sick in body as well as in soul, who yet kept the tough reasonableness and the lyric grace which he had already noted in Marvell.

Eliot complained that the world did not understand for what his soul was desperately searching. The poems had put him on a pinnacle; yet he suffered from his success, for

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no one understood him. They thought of him as a cynic; they thought of him certainly as a pagan; they thought that he had no morals and that he sneered at all religion. And yet behind his irony, behind his wit, behind his oddness, his spirit, quietly intent and serious, was looking for an ultimate truth that would satisfy both his longing for beauty and love and satisfy his moral instincts. For though, like Donne, he was

> To seize and clutch and penetrate,
> Expert beyond experience,

his experience was fastidious, and in his private life he was, as Donne wished in vain to be, as pure as any Puritan.

His painstaking thought had meanwhile accepted the conclusions of scholastic philosophy. It suited him because it is relentlessly precise, because it brings reason to acknowledge the supreme Reality as God, and because it harmonizes tense thought with the Christian tradition of Sacramental Trinitarianism. The supreme Reality was a Mind: this Mind knows itself with a perfect knowledge, perfectly expressed, the λόγος, the Word. And so between the Knower and the Known there is an intuitive unity which is the perfect love of which all the delicacy and expansion of human love are the natural image. Such is the Trinity in Unity, which absorbs created nature into its own perfectness, making new the things which have grown old, and raising up those which had been cast down until all are seen to be returning, with travailing and tears, to the perfection from which, in the chaos of annihilation, they took their origin and form. Eliot's intensity had forced him not to the despair of suicide, but to the effort of faith. The too quick despairers were horrified: he had betrayed their cause; he had forsaken his loyalties; he was therefore, if not "a lost soul, at least a lost sheep". And they greeted the two books which were his professions of Christianity with a howl; or to use a phrase of his own, with a noise that was less a bang than a whimper.

He brought out in succession a set of essays ranging in subject matter from Lancelot Andrewes to Baudelaire, and from Machiavelli to Mr. Irving Babbitt. The old precision, the old personal assessment, the old qualifications were there; but the attitude, if not cheerful, was changed. Although the voice was still a little sour and thin, it was a Christian voice. The very modern man had declared in his own way that everything was out-of-date except tradition. The tone, to be sure, had sometimes more superciliousness than confidence; one of Shelley's masterpieces was described as commonplace with "no brain work in it". Eliot preferred conceits: he preferred Crashaw. Crashaw and Hopkins, those two rare Papist poets, were the powers to whom he turned in the preparation for his next volume, the devotional poetry of *Ash-Wednesday*. In *The Waste Land* he had been searching; even earlier he had envisaged the view that the coarse hippopotamus of human nature might ascend from damp savannas to the azure height of air if, with the Church's help, he grew wings:

> Blood of the Lamb shall wash him clean
> And him shall heavenly arms enfold;
> Among the saints he shall be seen
> Performing on a harp of gold.

Such things could the true Church do, even though she had herself the flesh of the hippopotamus, for human nature mixed the breath of the faithful with plague and mist. Such was Eliot's old vision of the Church. And now he was finding it come true. By the hands of another American poet, William Force Stead, he had been christened. He

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began to live and love and believe as an Anglo-Catholic; the search over stony rubbish had found indeed a diamond, and the new verse told of the new life. "Devotional poetry", he now wrote, "is religious poetry which falls within an exact faith, and has precise objects for contemplation." But Eliot would not tolerate it unless there was brain-work in it; and since it had to do with worn themes, there must be no mention of a Lamb and hosannas now. The Bible could furnish remoter suggestions: somewhere a valley of dry bones, somewhere a juniper tree; the world and the flesh and the devil (now even in the world of thought abjured) could be made harmless not only to the soul but to poetry, if they could appear in the rich and strange skins of three white leopards. So one begins:—

Lady, three white leopards sat under a juniper tree
In the cool of the day, having fed to satiety
On my legs, my heart, my liver, and that which had been contained
In the hollow round of my skull. And God said
Shall these bones live? shall these
Bones live?

In other words, the godless poet had received the grace to enable him to pray, like the heartless man who once shot an albatross; and this is how Eliot prays:—

The new years walk, restoring,
Through a bright cloud of tears, the years, restoring
With a new verse the ancient rhyme. Redeem the time. Redeem
The unread vision in the higher dream
While jewelled unicorns draw by the gilded hearse.

And what truth had Eliot to tell? In the center of his devotional verse, he wished to state the Incarnation. It is a familiar theme. Let us take a verse of the old carol:—

Sacred Infant, all divine,
What a tender love was Thine,
Thus to come from highest bliss
Down to such a world as this.

Let us see what Hopkins makes of it:—

Now burn, new born to the world,
Doubled-naturèd name,
The heaven-flung, heart-flashed, maiden-furled
Miracle-in-Mary of a flame,
Midnumbered He in Thee of the thunder-throne!
Not a dooms-day dazzle in His coming nor dark as He came;
Kind, but royally reclaiming His own;
A released shower, let flash to the shire, not a lightning of fire had hurled.

But for Eliot there was not quite enough brain-work in that. He evolves it into this:—

Still is the unspoken word, the Word unheard,
The Word without a word, the Word within
The world, and for the world;
And the light shone in darkness and
Against the Word the unskilled world still whirled
About the center of the silent Word.

That is what brain-work brings us to. Sudden violent rhymes, insistent echoes within the phrase, intricate adjustment of the counter-claims between order and the dream's unconsciousness, fleeting suggestions, startling surprises, elision, concision. But there is one thing about *Ash-Wednesday*. The imagery may fly wild, but it is never grotesque, never sordid. It appears that Eliot had looked long enough at mean streets, and at the lives which the nineteenth century decreed that the larger multitudes for whom it found sustenance should live, to see clear "the unread vision in the higher dream". "The one veritable transitory power", "the vanished power of the usual reign": these may have gone. But with them came the sense that beyond them was another reality

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where all was good, because in comparison with it the lesser reality, deformed by evil, is a phantom that starts up out of the cogitations between

> The troubled midnight and the moon's repose.

But when Eliot's vision returns to the modern world, the irony is as grim as ever. One sees it in *Triumphal March*, and in an unpublished poem which one may quote:

> Come with the sweep of the little bat's wing, with the small flare of the firefly or lightning bug
> and
> "Rising, falling, crowned with dust," the small creatures,
> The small creatures chirp thinly through the dust, in the night,
> O Mother,
> What shall I cry?
> We demand a committee, a representative committee,
> A committee of investigation.
> RESIGN, RESIGN, RESIGN.

This poem is entitled *Difficulties of a Statesman*, and read aloud by the author is very far from being a failure. No one can understand it all; and Eliot's publishers whisper that if the links of thought are obvious in the draft of a poem, those links will be erased.

Arguing from the favourite familiar poem of Coleridge, he says that music and vision are the essence of poetry: understanding hardly matters. If one enjoys the poetry, the poetry will somehow let a meaning through, like light through gauze. Is it not so with Dante? One may not in the least agree with the philosophy and theology of the Catholic Church, and yet find the *Divina Commedia* a poem that invites joy beyond imagination. For "in good allegory like Dante's", Eliot writes, "it is not necessary to understand the meaning first to enjoy the poetry, but mere enjoyment of the poetry leads us to want to understand the meaning".

If one wants to understand Eliot's meaning, a swift brain rich in recondite allusions is not enough. One needs notes, and one needs a personal explanation. There are notes to *The Waste Land*, but they are not less necessary to *Ash-Wednesday*, where they are withheld. Is one to guess that the Lady in the Second Poem, the Lady of Silences, is at once Eliot's Beatrice, and the Madonna, and the Church herself, and mystic illumination? She is indeed all these, yet never precisely any of them. In a later poem there is a stair: it is an elaboration from the mention of a Provençal *escalina* in the twenty-sixth stanza of the *Purgatorio*. As the memory of lilac and brown hair fades, the exhausted lover says "I am not worthy" to the Lord who is to give a holier communion than human mouths can give. And yet nature still speaks; one cannot close one's senses to its sweet insinuations.

> Though I do not wish to wish these things
> From the wide window towards the granite shore
> The white sails still fly seaward, seaward flying,
> Unbroken wings,
> And the lost heart stiffens and rejoices
> In the lost lilac and the lost sea voices,
> And the weak spirit quickens to rebel
> For the bent golden rod and the lost sea smell
> Quickens to recover
> The cry of quail and whirling plover,
> And the blind eye creates
> The empty forms between the ivory gates
> And smell renews the salt savour of the sandy earth.

So beautiful, echoing, surprising, fresh, ingenious come the aspirations from the subconscious—tangled, higgledy-piggledy still, like the stuff from which reason has to

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arrange all her discourse. And just where arrangement is most deliberate, in poetry, it is to hint of all the vagueness out of which reason comes from its physical concomitants, and all the unintelligible glory of transcendent things in which it is to lose itself in light as at its origin it loses itself in the dark night of physical life. For when Mr. Eliot was just caustic, he made himself the model of his own Mr. Apollinax and "laughed like an irresponsible foetus", he jeered at children in church with a revolting grimace:—

> The young are red and pustular
> Clutching piaculative pence.

He hinted grotesque, rancid, and abnormal obscenities. He peered for photographs into the shark-like jaws of hell. An irresponsible foetus, however, Eliot is now no longer; only from time to time in gestures of that modesty which is one with his sincerity, and one also with his consciousness of his cleverness, he reminds us that he occasionally returns to that privilege of early irresponsibility. It suits a regenerate man. For if one asks, "Can a man be born again?" some of the early Eliot poems give the answer that he can.

Eliot epitomizes our existence, epitomizes the culture of the New World. He is indeed a symbol of an age, he is a *Passage to India* and back again. The grave, meagre, careful, exactness of his prose (it used to remind one of an elderly virgin walking down from Beacon Hill in Boston to survey the sallow flow of the River Charles), the patterned chaos of his melodious verse (so might an Aztec Indian design his tumbled and gaudy fancies) are not in themselves immortal masterpieces; but with a proper combination of care and self abandonment, they could easily become so. They need to compromise a little with each other, his poetry and prose. And he himself needs to remember that poetry is not a soliloquy, that its aim is to communicate a communion—in his own words "to state a vision"—and not merely to make a musical pattern out of chaotic memories.

His poetry is too defiant; his prose too precise. And there is, to tell the truth, a certain ingredient of superciliousness in both these excesses. His temperament is not rich enough in respectful fervour. This Anglo-Catholic (like most Catholics), is still something of a Puritan. His very virtues are the Puritan's: the toughness, the patience, the conscientiousness, the acceptance of the new, the personal fidelity, the pioneering energy, the preciseness. He has New England's best in his blood and in his bones, like America's one consummate poetess. For—though, as we saw, he is no longer irresponsible—T. S. Eliot is the rebellious younger brother—or should we say the changeling son?—of Edith Wharton. Like her he follows direct on Browning, on Meredith, and on Whitman. He is in fact like Hopkins a Victorian, but certainly a conscious individual and therefore an *American* Victorian, having much in common with Emily Dickinson.

When he goes back to Harvard, it will be indeed, though for a season, the native who returns.

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DRY BOOK COLLECTING

by Harry F. Cunningham

This is, I believe, a new sort of book collecting. It is one that offers much enjoyment, occupies much time, and costs but little—if any—real money. One knows of course of the modern sport of "dry" fly-fishing—a sport indulged in so seriously by any number of completely equipped anglers. One also knows of the more modern sport of dry cow-fishing which was described so delightfully—in a limited edition that all collectors desire and most of them lack—by Doctor Kipling for the Rowfant Club. I do suspect, though, that the sport of Dry Book Collecting is entirely new. I feel that I invented it myself. And, filled with the generous spirit that actuates all innovators, I am simply bursting with the urge to tell the world about it. I hope that the following brief *avertissement* may result in such a surge of enthusiasm in all worth-while quarters that an International Dry Book Collectors' Club may eventually be realized. How wonderful it would be if the whole of Bookdom might take up this new sport seriously, and devotees from all corners of the round sad world might gather together in some pleasantly damp spot and discuss the year's progress in the new dry sport. Perhaps the word "dry" in the present connection is a bit ambiguous—one hopes that it is not misleading—but, when one reflects upon the net material results of "dry" fly-fishing, for example, the word seems appropriate enough.

In order to get the utmost out of the new sport, one must have his name placed on the mailing lists of the leading—and most expensive—English booksellers. He should likewise have his name on the mailing list of at least one of the less expensive firms, for thus he will enjoy a certain variety and some interesting contrasts that increase immeasurably the moral value of the sport. I suggest as a starter that one get on the lists of Maggs Brothers, Sotheran, Dulau & Company, Ltd., and John Grant of Edinburgh. One will wish to add to his series of *fournisseurs* from time to time, but the series suggested above is a good one for a beginner —and each one of us must be a beginner at something, sometime.

When the Catalogues and the "Prices Current" begin to come in, one should hold himself carefully in hand and nonchalantly lay them aside. This allows the initial equipment to accumulate in interesting fashion and it also insures to all items a fair chance of becoming out-of-date and probably unobtainable. It is quite desirable—as will presently be patent—that all items should acquire those two characteristics if the sport is to exert its full moral influence upon the earnest sportsman. Soon enough the pile of Catalogues and "Prices Current" will have grown so large as to be very much in the way, and one's wife will have complained bitterly about "that pile of trash" on numerous occasions. The appropriate moment will then have arrived for the sportsman to provide himself with a fine pen and a bottle of ink (a quill and an old inkhorn would be

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better, but such ideal equipment is difficult to come by in these days) and a generous supply of cigarettes or a good pipe. If one elects for the cigarettes it is well to select those that do not have tips, for the true sportsman becomes so absorbed in the sport that he invariably puts the wrong end of the tipped cigarettes in his mouth and the taste and aroma of burning cork are not conducive to the fullest enjoyment of the sport.

The equipment suggested being at hand, the sportsman takes his place in a comfortable chair and proceeds to examine the items in the Catalogues, etc. In the course of this examination he will discover books he *wants* to own. He makes—with his pen and ink—a very neat little circle opposite the number of each item he *wants*. Finally the sportsman will have gone through all the lists that Time, aided by the generosity of Messrs. Maggs *et al.*, has accumulated for him. He will thus have completed the first stage in the new sport and will be—one suspects—an incurable Dry Book Collector. Really, however, one is at this stage the merest novice. After the first stage is completed, the pile of Catalogues and "Prices Current" should be laid aside for awhile, so that they, and the sportman's judgment, may ripen a bit.

It will be discovered that this ripening period is a very difficult time for the novice to go through, but the serious sportsman will strive, with all of the self-control that distinguishes true Book Collectors (both wet and dry), to so restrain himself that the ripening may be thorough. The second stage of the new sport is like unto the first stage in so far as the equipment is concerned, but it is accomplished with much less rapidity and, since each succeeding stage requires more and more time, it will be well—as one enters the second stage—to cancel all engagements for an indefinite period and plan to devote oneself entirely to the new sport. The object now is to determine just which items, among those marked with the neat little circles, the sportsman wants *very much* to own. This demands very careful reading and re-reading of the descriptions of the items. It demands also a deal of careful weighing of the items one against another. One should begin to consider seriously, at this time, just where he could put in additional shelves, just how the new shelves will be spaced, and so on. It will finally be determined that there are certain items that one wants *very much* to own, and within the very neat little circle opposite the number of each of such items, the sportsman draws a very neat little cross to indicate the "very much". When the pile has been gone through in this manner, the Catalogues etc. are laid aside and the second stage of the new sport has been completed.

By this time a number of new Catalogues etc. will have come in and they will be crying out for attention. It is imperative that the sportsman turn a deaf ear to such cries, and the surest way to maintain the ear in the required condition is to hide the new Catalogues bravely in some safe dark place. The long-empty wine cellar is suggested as an appropriate place in which to store the new Catalogues temporarily. Book catalogues and rare old wines (one is reminded of Weir Mitchell's *A Madeira Party*) have brought more innocent pleasure to cultivated gentlemen than any other things one can think of, and it would be both appropriate and the part of intelligence to store the one in the place from which ignorance has—at least for the time being—ejected the other.

Well, the third stage of the new sport will presently be demanding attention, and for this stage the equipment and the procedure

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are as for the other stages. The work now goes very slowly, for the Catalogues have become old friends—as even Catalogues will—and they are handled almost reverently. One starts through again. Each item with the crossed circle is studied and re-studied. One knows by this time almost what the book represented by the crossed circle looks like, at least in imagination. One can almost feel the book and hold it and turn its pages in the affectionate, caressing way that only book-lovers know. One can almost see and appraise the title page—perhaps it is in Red and Black. One has almost decided to place his own bookplate over that of the former owner, taking good care to use very little paste and that little only around the edges—and then one has elected to let the older plate show (it is a good one) and to place his own lower down. And so on. Ah! In the joy of these reflections I had almost forgotten to set down the instructions for the third stage of the new sport. Books and thoughts about them do have a way of pulling one's mind off the main road and into pleasant by-ways, but isn't that, after all, one of the very finest things about books?

Ah, yes, that third stage! This time the sportsman must indicate the books he has simply *got to have*, and there is no decision in a book-lover's experience more momentous than that which concerns a book he has simply *got to have*. One finally makes a decision and finds that he has simply *got to have* a certain item. So he carefully draws a very neat horizontal line through the crossed circle, taking great care that the very neat horizontal line passes exactly through the intersection of the two arms of the cross and extends a little beyond the limits of the circle at either side. This first decision will have taken a very long time—I have spent a whole evening on such a decision more times than I dare admit, and felt amply rewarded for the time. You will do the same thing and feel the same way, or I am more abnormal even than I had hoped. After such a decision is made there is a glorious feeling of satisfied relief that steals over one and sends shivers up and down his spinal column, and after the shivers quiet down the sportsman approaches his next decision with much more confidence. When—weeks later—the whole pile of Catalogues etc. has been gone through in this manner, the marked lists are laid carefully aside and the third stage of the new sport has been completed.

One now approaches the fourth and final stage of the game. And at this point the sportsman should prepare himself with a season of fasting and prayer. It helps in the fasting to have one's teeth removed (if so be it that one still has teeth). As to the prayer the present writer has no recipe. One either can do it or he cannot. I cannot. The earnest sportsman should scrupulously avoid, for the moment, all stimulating beverages of doubtful provenance—even tomato-juice has been known to be dangerous here. After a proper season of devout preparation one collects again his equipment and takes his place in the comfortable chair with the pipe or the un-tipped cigarettes. It is now the sportsman's happy privilege to select the books he is going to *buy*, and this takes much profound reflection—but (one hastens to add) no money. One goes over the pages in the uppermost Catalogue until he comes to the first crossed circle with the very neat horizontal line through its middle. Here he pauses; here he stops; here he stays!

Does the book feel right? Is the binding pleasant to look at and to handle? Do the italics on the title page annoy? Is the paper the proper weight and of the right texture—is the ink of the proper colour and the type

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of the weight and style that seem appropriate and pleasant? Yes, by Golly! One will *buy* that book! It is done; the book is bought and its place on the "new shelves" is determined. So a very neat vertical line is drawn very carefully (watch out for the trembling hand) through the crossed circle that already has the very neat horizontal line exactly through its middle, and the sportsman makes sure that the very neat vertical line will pass exactly through the intersection of the two arms of the cross and will extend a very little, above and below, beyond the limits of the circle. And then one notes very neatly, just below the final mark, the date of the "purchase". It is recommended that the numerical system of dating be used, as that system saves time and space and is much neater. For example: third August, nineteen thirty-two would be written 3-VIII-32. This dating is very important—absolutely essential in fact—to the full enjoyment of the new sport, for the actual "ownership" of a book acquired through the new Dry Collecting is determined by the date on which it was "bought" and there is no other way in which it can be determined. If one is a serious, earnest sportsman therefore, and has the best interests of his shelves truly at heart, he must date his "purchases". At first I did not date mine. And one day I mentioned the new sport to a friend. Some days later I told him of a book I had "bought" the day before and he asked from whom I had bought it. I remarked, with the nonchalance that becomes a Dry Collector, that I had bought it from Sotheran and he told me excitedly that it just couldn't be so, for *he* had bought it from Sotheran the week before. Since then I have always dated my "buys" and I have beaten my friend a handsome number of times. But he dates his now, also, so I shall no longer be so sure of my "buys" as I should like to be.

An illustration of the new sport as it works out in practice may be of interest to prospective Dry Book Collectors. Only today I completed the fourth and final stage in a Dry Book Collection that has been going on for a month. Involved in this collection were four Catalogues from Messrs. Maggs, two from Sotheran, three from John Grant, and one most precious thing called a "Catalogue for Typophiles" from Dulau & Company, Ltd. I "bought" a number of items from each of the Catalogues, after much thought and study, and after many a side trip through the by-ways of the imagination. From Dulau I "bought" at least one item from every good Press in the alphabet, all the way from Aldus Manutius the Older to Anton. Vincentium of Lyons. I actually *ordered*—from John Grant—a little Baskerville item at 10s. 6d. and a first issue of Butler's *Hudibras* at 22s. 6d. In this way I have "acquired" a perfectly gorgeous collection of books that would make any normal collector's mouth water, and I will presently become the possessor of two books that I can afford, and all of this for a total outlay of thirty-three shillings. Also I have occupied, most enjoyably and withal most innocently, the spare time (and some that was not so spare) of a full month of thirty-one days. I am convinced that there is no more delightful and appropriate—surely there is no more harmless and inexpensive—sport in which the indigent book-lover may indulge, than this new sport of mine.

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BOODLE IN BOOKS

AN ENGLISH VIEW OF THE BOOK-CLUBS

Anonymous

SIR ERNEST HART had gone on from strength to strength. His pre-War strength was that of Mr. Ernst Hertz: it had risen during the War to that of Sir Ernest Hart, and his post-War strength, he expected, would develop into a peerage. Lord Ben-Nevis would be a nice name. He was a large, pink, middle-aged man of exceeding affluence which he had himself won by hook and by crook, and it is only just to say that he had hooked far more than he crooked. He had the Midas touch, a natural adhesiveness to money; money stuck to his fingers like fly-paper, and most of all he loved to buy up some bankrupt business and cause it to vomit gold. He had a flair for what the public would be interested in tomorrow, and the bulk of his colossal income was derived from newspapers.

He owned *Fashion*, which he had acquired when it was most unfashionable, but *Fashion* now had its sixty pages of advertisements, seductively illustrated with pictures of willowy women in corsets or in fur-coats or in nothing at all lying in hot baths, discreetly veiled by steam, and voluptuously smiling at a tin of bath-salts in the foreground. He was the owner of the *Sunday Advertiser* which retailed police court news of the more shocking and passionate sort, and he was the owner of the *Sunday Chronicle*, of which six pages were devoted to reviews and advertisements of recent books. Between the three he reached a large public.

His finger was always on the pulses of his properties, and he had noticed that, for the last year or two, since John Fairfax had been writing two columns per week about current fiction, the circulation of this latter paper had been steadily mounting and now exceeded that of *Fashion* and the *Sunday Advertiser*. He drew the sound mercantile conclusion that though quantities of people were interested in corsets and crime (which were the features of *Fashion* and the *Sunday Advertiser*), an increasing number were interested in books, which were the feature of the *Sunday Chronicle*. For himself, he never read any book except his pass-book: business and pleasure made a full day for him. But evidently many idle folk did read them, and wanted to know what John Fairfax said about them; for when he praised a book one week, his words were invariably quoted in publishers' advertisements the next week, usually with the announcement that the volume that had pleased him had gone into its second or third or fiftieth large printing. He wrote in a sparkling style, full of quips and puns and raptures and little rhymes, and he made it a rule to discover a genius every week.

Sir Ernest began to think about books, not, it need hardly be remarked, with the idea of reading them, but as pieces of merchandise like corsets or bath-salts. This young man, to whom he paid twenty pounds a week for his remarks on "Recent Fiction", seemed to be

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able to influence the sale of books. Sir Ernest made certain private enquiries about the incomes of publishers, and found that some of them were, if not rich, very decently well off. As owner of three papers he had not much to learn about printing and distribution, and it was not many weeks after he recognized books as possible merchandise that he made up his mind to start a publishing house. He sent for John Fairfax and offered him the important post of reader.

The advantages of this plan were obvious. John Fairfax would read the manuscripts sent in by aspiring authors, and select the likely ones. On their appearance he would write flaming reviews of them in the *Sunday Chronicle*.

"I've been watching the effect of your weekly articles on 'Recent Fiction', Mr. Fairfax," said Sir Ernest, "and it's my opinion that a good boosting from you sells a book like hot cakes. You'll select for publication by me the books that take your fancy, and then it's only natural that you should sing Hallelujah about them in your weekly article. Don't overdo it, you know. Don't make all the publications of Hart & Co. (and I'm the Co. as well as the Hart) works of tip-top genius. I don't expect that. But I expect you within reasonable limits to do your best for the books that you've recommended me to publish. Be honest about it: back your own opinions, and state them strongly".

The plan worked admirably, and in the ensuing publishing season Hart & Co. made a pretty penny out of three books which, at due intervals, John Fairfax hailed respectively as the novel of (1) the year, (2) the decade, and (3) the century. The novel of the century did the least well of these, but it had more time before it and no doubt the remaining sixty-eight years of the century would vindicate his verdict. Then further ramifications hatched in Sir Ernest's incubating mind, and he started a column of reviews of recent fiction in *Fashion* and the *Sunday Advertiser*. Fairfax, with the assistance of his sister, a most literary lady, wrote these also. The novels of the year, the decade, and the century received in these columns the unstinted praise they had so justly earned from him in the *Sunday Chronicle*, but he put them (or his sister did) in a different order, and expressed his views from different but equally enthusiastic standpoints. These reviews he wrote anonymously.

Fairfax adopted other weapons than praise in order to obtain a public for the firm of which he was reader. He devoted, for instance, his entire column in *Fashion* to the book that became the best-seller of the year, *The Arms of Jezebel,* and deadly was his damnation of it. No decent woman, he thundered, should allow it in her house: it bedizened in modern garb the most infamous orgies of Imperial Rome: it called for the instant intervention of the censor and for a prosecution before the police magistrates of the City of London, who so rightly decreed what the English public may read and what it may not. And *The Arms of Jezebel* was written in the most exquisite and subtle style: it made seductive the abominations of which it treated. It was a trap for adolescents and adults alike.

Sir Ernest glanced over this review the day after *Fashion* appeared, and sent in a fury for Fairfax. Fairfax reassured him. There was nothing in Jezebel's arms that need alarm him. He also informed him that Hart and Co.'s three lines of telephones had been incessantly employed all morning with answering the repeat-orders for *Jezebel* from booksellers all over the country. He recommended Sir Ernest to put an apology in all his three papers saying that, owing to the

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unprecedented demand for the book, the stock had run out, but it was being reprinted with all possible speed.

There appeared an equally fruitful fulmination about *The Arms of Jezebel* next Sunday in the *Chronicle*, and also an offering in verse in praise of a novel just published by Hart & Co. called *Miriam Gobbe* by Celia Jeans. This ran:—

Miriam Gobbe, how I gobbled you up!
I took you to lunch and to dine and to sup.
How naughty you were, though as lovely as Venus,
And your readers will swear that Miss Jeans is a genius.

Sir Ernest liked that, and *Miriam Gobbe* was a great success. Fairfax told him then that the book was written by himself. Sir Ernest was delighted. "Paddling your own canoe," he said. "Paddle it as hard as you like, provided you've got mine in tow".

II

So far, this is only preamble: the purpose of it is to show how right Sir Ernest was to suspect there was boodle in books. In order to bag that boodle, he saw that you had to bait your hooks artfully. Mere advertisement did not do the trick; besides, it was exceedingly expensive, and the right lure, he believed, for the reading public was professional opinion. Hitherto he had only used the bait of John Fairfax: he had a following which trusted his recommendation (or, wisely framed, his damnation) about books. But every sound commercial idea was capable of an expanded application, and Sir Ernest began to wonder whether authors, well known and popular authors, could not be induced to do him a similar service. One of the most widely read authors of the day was Philip Johnson, that profound specialist in morbid psychology. If he could be persuaded to recommend a publication of Hart & Co., that would surely carry weight with his public. Just a few words from Philip Johnson: "I have long been waiting for just such a book as was sent me this morning from Messrs. Hart. It was a revelation: I was glad that I was alive when *Grapes of Gomorrah* was published. . . ." Then there was the famous authoress Ellaline Little, the feminist, a staid gaunt spinster covered with Egyptian beads, who, said John Fairfax, wrote the most lyrical prose. And there was Freddie Bearcroft who had a third following of readers who delighted in colossal chronicles that narrated the history of some family for a couple of generations. Long books of seven or eight hundred pages. All these three had widely different publics who would surely follow the counsels of their favourite author.

There must be scope here for something remunerative, thought Sir Ernest, if only he could coördinate the factors. He felt certain that a regular service of such professional opinions would have great weight with those who liked reading books: they wanted to be told by experts what to read, and what books to buy. Such books need not be the publications of his own house, but he must somehow acquire an interest in them. . . . The problem began to colour his dreams, and he often woke Lady Hart by muttering mystic sentences such as, "Say twenty thousand at three-and-six", or, "I could get books at a heavy discount in bulk". In fact his dreams continued the working out of what had baffled him during the day and one night he gave a great snort and cried out: "Hullo, old lady, I'm on the track. I shall start a Fiction Club".

The idea rapidly took shape. There was the reading public, a vast and nebulous body, who eagerly looked out (as John Fairfax's

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articles proved) for literary guidance. He intended to offer it the guidance of three very popular authors. He would get these eminent folk to form a committee which, through a monthly pamphlet, would review and recommend to the Fiction Club three novels. There would be no subscription; but the members would be entitled month by month to receive the expert advice of three stunning authors. They would be bound, however (positively their only outlay), to buy from the Fiction Club one of these three selected books at the price they would pay for it at bookstalls. Probably most readers bought at least one book a month, and were often chagrined to find it was dreary rubbish. Now, free, gratis, and for nothing, they would have the guidance of professional advice. If they did not like the book they had selected, they could exchange it for any other of the three recommended novels.

As for the Committee, he felt sure that he could secure the services of the three personages named above, or, if not, of others equally eminent. He would give them a generous share in the profits of the Fiction Club, and (what would appeal to high-souled highbrowed folk even more) he would point out that they were doing a splendid work in directing public taste in fiction. What power they would wield! How they would encourage the noblest literature! And what wonderful libraries members would acquire! Their shelves would be full of the first editions of all the best contemporary English fiction, since he would arrange with the publishers that as soon as the Committee's selection was made for the ensuing month, they should supply in advance the earliest copies of these works.

Then came the more technical business side of the project. He would invite twenty of the leading publishers in London to send copies of their most promising publications to the members of his committee, who would then make their selection. As soon as that was done, he (Sir Ernest) would approach the publishers of the favoured works and make terms for the supply of (say) a thousand copies of each. Any publisher would be glad to give a handsome discount for such an order, even if it left him only a narrow margin of profit. He would have a sale, anyhow, of a thousand copies, and he would know that the book would be recommended to the Fiction Club by three of the most eminent novelists, and, incidentally, by the influential pen of John Fairfax in the *Sunday Advertiser*, *Fashion*, and the *Sunday Chronicle*. Sir Ernest's own profits would arise from the fact that he would buy his seven-and-sixpenny novels at (say) three shillings, and sell them to the Fiction Club at seven-and-sixpence. There was boodle here.

There were also difficulties. Publishers pointed out that if they supplied Sir Ernest with (say) a thousand copies of a forthcoming novel at three shillings, the margin left for their own profit and the author's royalties would be pitiful. A popular author who was reasonably certain of selling not a mere thousand but ten or twenty thousand would see no reason why the benediction of the Fiction Club should deprive him of most of his royalty over the first thousand. Moreover, if the Fiction Club prospered and sold not a thousand copies of its three selections but twenty or thirty thousand, such an author, in return for the honour of Miss Ellaline Little's approval, would forfeit somewhere about nine-tenths of the royalties he would otherwise have enjoyed. The leading publishers in London were afraid that popular authors would not appreciate this.

Here the Literary Committee was in agree-

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ment with the publishers. They were all highly popular authors and quite apart from the obvious indelicacy, as directors of public taste, of recommending the members of the Fiction Club to buy their own works (or even each other's works) they shivered at the thought of having their hard-earned profits so ruthlessly curtailed for themselves, and entering the vast pockets of Sir Ernest. It would never do. So the scope of their selections was very circumscribed: they would confine themselves to the works of rising and comparatively unknown authors, who would swoon with joy at seeing so glorious an advertisement as the approval of the Big Three and the backing of John Fairfax.

"It's a great idea," said Freddie Bearcroft. "We three will be directing the literary taste of our generation. There's a lot of young talent about that ought to be recognized. But at present the public sticks to the old favourites. Obsolete, most of them, and it's time some of the old birds were knocked off their perches."

The Fiction Club was launched and its success swiftly exceeded the highest expectations. Within six months its membership rose to thirty thousand and thus every month there were despatched to eager homes thirty thousand copies of the *Monthly Review* and thirty thousand volumes of one or other of the Committee's selections. Month by month Philip Johnson, Ellaline Little, and Freddie Bearcroft proclaimed the masterpieces of authors of hitherto humble circulation. Philip found *Glad Eye* the exact book which his nature craved. He rejoiced to see its day and sat up into the middle of the night to finish it. Ellaline could not find words to express the beauty of *Cymbals and Symbols*. It inaugurated a new method in fiction; it was a pageant of emotional life that dispensed with the old technique of story-telling. Her heart bled, her eyes rained. Freddie was more judicial. *Gnashings of Teeth* was not a perfect book. Far from it. There was a misprint on page 237. There were fireworks. There were purple patches. But he defied anyone to put the book down. An awful, a demoniac power about it. He wished it was longer. Usually he wished books were shorter. And week by week John Fairfax endorsed their selections from an independent standpoint, for officially he had nothing to do with the Fiction Club. Week by week also, he discovered some new masterpiece issued by Hart & Co.

A membership of thirty thousand was the high water mark of the Fiction Club. Even in these balmy palmy days there were occasional squalls. Freddie, for instance, had discovered a masterpiece of unique merit in *Soap Bubbles*, but when Sir Ernest came to deal with its publishers Messrs. Markham refused to let him have ten thousand copies, with optional repeats on the same terms, for less than the terms they gave to the libraries. They thought very highly of the book and expected a large sale. Sir Ernest refused this offer, said that he would not take a single copy, and told his Literary Committee that they must find another choice for next month. Freddie demurred: he had already written his panegyric.

"But, my dear sir, I can't supply the book," said Sir Ernest. "Those shabby fellows won't make me special terms. Don't you ever select one of Markham's books again. I'll teach them!"

"Pity to lose it," said Freddie. "That book will make a splash. We shall get hundreds of letters complaining that we didn't select it."

"Can't be helped," said Sir Ernest. "You'll have to select another. And I'll tell

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Fairfax to write very meanly about it in my papers."

Unfortunately he forgot to do this, and loyal John Fairfax, believing *Soap Bubbles* to be a selection of the Fiction Club, proclaimed it in the *Sunday Advertiser* and *Chronicle* to be the finest piece of fiction in the English language since *Vanity Fair*. It was fire and wine; it had the ruthlessness of the great Russian masters and the delicacy of the French. No more need England, et cetera. He repaired the mischief he had done as well as he could by telling the readers of *Fashion* on Wednesday that its only resemblance to a Soap Bubble was its emptiness, not its iridescence, but it was too late. Mr. Gerald Gould, Mr. Compton Mackenzie, Mr. Desmond MacCarthy, Mr. Beverley Nichols, Mr. L. A. G. Strong all gave it an eternal niche in the Temple of Art. Altogether this was a tragic occurrence and waspish letters from as far away as the Outer Hebrides poured in to the Literary Committee demanding to be told why, when at last a great book appeared, not one of them had the sense to recommend it instead of the dreary rubbish they had selected for May. And it was all Sir Ernest's fault. He had no appreciation of art. Just money, money, money.

Then Freddie had a personal misfortune. He brought out in the same month what he considered his greatest masterpiece of all, namely, a novel called *The Verralls*, which gave the history of three generations of a large family of half-witted farmers in Sussex during the first seventy-five years of the nineteenth century. It contained a geological table of the clan and a map of the Romney Marsh on a large scale, so that the reader could see exactly where all these collateral families lived. Roads, dykes, and pastures were all marked: you could easily trace Jasper Verrall's midnight walk to the house of his third cousin Webster Verrall whom he suspected of having seduced his wife; you could find the Sea-gate at Winchelsea from which the elder Marianne (b. 1809) watched the conflagration at Westpoint Farm in which the younger Marianne and her lover Joseph Verrall miserably perished. Broadacres Farm was there, where the swarm of bees settled on Godfrey Verrall after his bath, and the Woolpack Inn where Sidney sat boozing, the church at Brooklands, where Amos was bigamously married to Caroline, and the hedge behind which mad Meg Verrall plucked and ate a coot. Freddie had spared no pains to secure for this *magnum opus* the welcome it so well deserved: every critic of importance had dined with him during the month before its appearance; he had given interviews to half a dozen lady journalists; and on the day of publication six pictures of him had appeared in the press, two of them slim and faun-like bathing in the Lido, one with his dog, one with his cat, and two in different attitudes brooding in profile on his work with his head on his hand like Shakespeare. A chorus, a clamour of unstinted admiration hailed *The Verralls* —had he written all the reviews himself he could not have done them better. The critics said that Thomas Hardy must henceforth take a second place in novels in which beats the great rural heart of England, and they all looked forward with an unbearable suspense to the next three volumes of this unique "quattuorology" (some said quattrology).

But in spite of this imperial epiphany *The Verralls* did not sell one tithe of the number Freddie expected, and of the special two-guinea edition of one thousand copies on hand-made paper with the signature of the author only seventy-five were disposed of.

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The reason for this *débâcle* was patent. The Fiction Club had done the damage. Thirty thousand readers were buying a book a month from it, and their purses were limited. What made it more bitter was that Freddie himself was one of those three whose advice so large a public was following. It was glorious to direct public taste like that, but who would have expected that public taste should have been so disastrously diverted from the books he wrote to those he recommended? Even bitterer yet was the thought that the profits on the sales of such books went into the pockets of Sir Ernest. The Literary Committee, it is true, had their share in these but it was nothing compared with his. Sir Ernest bought thirty thousand books a month at three shillings and their pronouncements enabled him to sell them at seven-and-sixpence. He paid no royalties to authors, he had no expense in the production of these books, and he collared four-and-sixpence over each copy. His outgoings were insignificant, the premises of his papers gave him storage room: all he had to pay for was packing and postage and the bringing out, monthly, of the flimsy little organ in which Freddie and Ellaline and Philip madly extolled the work of their younger colleagues but could not recommend their own. Freddie perceived that he had tapped his own public and the beer was frothing into Sir Ernest's mug. Before the summer was over Ellaline and Philip each brought out a new book and experienced the same devastation of their fields; it was as if a cloud of locusts had settled on them.

The Big Three were dining one night in Freddie's large and ladylike flat to make their selection for the next month. Nowadays a dozen bright young clerks went through the piles of volumes which publishers sent in, and made a preliminary choice of six which were then sent to each member of the Committee. They read these, and, when they met, arranged by a majority vote which three should be selected. This business went forward while they discussed cocktails made of vodka and cream in equal parts. The cream caused this delicious mixture to slide down the gullet with a smooth and soothing motion and then the vodka got to work. At first it deepened the general discontent.

"A more deplorable midden of unreadable sewage", said Philip, "I've never encountered. And yet I'm party to recommending thirty thousand innocent fellow-countrymen to read three of these books, and to writing an enthusiastic review about one."

"Hear, hear," said Ellaline. "Every month we three will be responsible for the mental diet and decay of thirty thousand readers. Why did we ever come into it? Mainly your fault, Freddie. It was you who were so keen on bringing bright new authors forward, and, as I remember your saying with your silly laugh, knocking the old birds off their perches. You've done it: and here are you and Philip and I lying at the bottom of the cage on our backs, and others are eating our groundsel."

"I call it transfusion of blood," said Philip. "We've been cracking up a lot of wretched scribblers and pouring our own circulation into their veins. That's what we've done."

"I'm sure no one's suffered more than me," said Freddie. "But I'm dreadfully sorry your book hasn't gone well, Ellaline. I read it, I thought it stupendous. You're priceless: no one can write such gorgeous lyrical stuff."

"I'm priceless only in the sense that no one will pay seven-and-sixpence for my lyrical stuff," said Ellaline. "Well, let's get to work and finish up with our selection of garbage."

This melancholy duty done, they settled

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which of them was to extol each of the chosen masterpieces and went in to dinner. The vodka became inventive.

"I've got to get back my circulation somehow," said Ellaline, "for it makes me cold to see booksellers' windows filled with our selections. I think I shall write a libellous book about you, Freddie. I shall describe you with hideous accuracy: your lovely auburn hair, which I shall say is dyed, your ebony cane, your lovely white legs—my dear, those Lido photographs!—your eyeglass, your genius for publicity. I shall make you a popular author who writes Sagas about incestuous farmers in the Romney Marsh, so that there shall be no mistake. You shall have a farm house there where you conduct revolting orgies in a leopard skin and sandals playing a flute. You shall be an odious brat of irregular birth with a Narcissus-complex. You shall—"

"My dear! What a glorious idea!" he said. "There'll be terrific excitement in the press. It ought to sell by the million. Do write it before I go lecturing in America. And a splendid advertisement for *The Verralls*! Then, let me see, . . . I'll threaten you with a libel action."

Ellaline clapped her hands.

"Good! You'll give interviews to every paper in England and tell them so. Naturally you won't really go through with it."

His face clouded.

"But that will look rather mean-spirited", he said, "as if I couldn't face it."

"No: give some more interviews when the sale begins to fall off: say that I've expressed my agonized contrition and that for the sake of an old friendship you've forgiven me. You'll be nobler than ever."

"That would do," said he. "And the libraries—you must see to that—will be bound to ban your book, so everyone will buy it."

During the next three months, while Ellaline's book was in parturition, the membership of the Fiction Club began seriously to dwindle. It was in vain that the Big Three periodically and punctually announced their discoveries of masterpieces, and that John Fairfax endorsed them with an unrivalled wealth of superlatives. The letter-box of the Fiction Club was gorged with rude abuse condemning the latest selections as tripe and rubbish and bilge, and the column of members sank like the quicksilver in a barometer on the approach of stormy weather. From thirty thousand it receded to twenty, and from twenty to fifteen. In vain was inserted in the *Monthly Review* a literary cross-word puzzle, open only to members of the Club, of which the prize for the first opened correct solution was any book which the Big Three had recommended. There was only one entry and that was wrong. Then other publishers began to follow the contemptible example set by Messrs. Markham and, if they held a high opinion of any book they were about to bring out, they did not send it in to the Fiction Club. Why should they, they insolently asked, hand over to Sir Ernest and his minions the harvest that was theirs by rights of the risks they had run in outlay of printing and binding? The pernicious doctrine spread rapidly. Authors seemed to be equally ungrateful. Those whose works had been among the earliest selections of the Fiction Club, and who were now ready with a second novel, strongly protested against "that Pirate" (so they said) collaring so large a percentage of their profits. They preferred that their publishers should advertise the second book as being by the author whose first book had been selected by the Big Three. Even that distinction was rapidly becoming unenviable, for the November selection had been found so

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unreadable that copies of these works of genius had been returned by the hundred by subscribers who frankly refused to buy such bilge and sent in their resignations.

The Board meeting to arrange for December was very disagreeable. Stacks of returned books lined the walls, a pile of letters of withdrawal rose high on the Chairman's table, and the Chairman was far from cordial to the Big Three.

"You don't seem to be able to lead the public taste", he said, "nor even to hit it. People can't read your works of genius. Never been so many resignations before."

"I fancy January will be worse," said Freddie.

"But surely there are lots of books being published which our members would appreciate if you could only manage to spot them", said Sir Ernest.

"Publishers no longer send us books they think they can sell themselves," said Ellaline.

"I can't provide you with books that the publishers won't let me have at a reasonable discount, Miss Little. I am not running this show to line other publishers' nests. It only requires handling to make a best-seller, and you don't seem to be able to handle them. Look at that book I published last year, *The Arms of Jezebel*. John Fairfax wrote a slasher in one of my papers, saying that no decent woman would have it in the house. What happened? Why, I sold eighty thousand of it! That's what I call handling."

"Not quite so easy for us, Sir Ernest," said Ellaline. "We could hardly recommend a book because no decent woman would have it in her house."

"Well, if we go on as we are doing", he snapped, "we shall have to put up the shutters."

The shrinkage was still progressing when Ellaline's book entitled *Muck* was published by Messrs. Markham. So grossly libellous and so unmistakable was the principal figure in it, that in tacit unanimity the critics of the entire press, with one exception, ignored it altogether: the one exception was John Fairfax who in the *Sunday Chronicle* wrote "*Muck*, by Ellaline Little. Quite so". Even the rumour, sedulously spread by the authoress, that Freddie was about to prosecute her for libel had no effect, and the ban put on it by the libraries did not help, for in the absence of reviews, nobody asked for it. Anything so still-born had never been known, and indeed it was no birth at all: it was a wind-egg, an addled egg, any sort of egg but a good egg. Messrs. Markham had nearly twenty thousand copies of it on their hands and had paid Ellaline two thousand pounds on account of royalties. After a month of stagnation and an agitating interview with the authoress, the firm offered nineteen thousand one hundred and four copies of it to Sir Ernest Hart at the remainder price of one shilling-and-sixpence each, and, as a bribe for his acceptance, the English rights of the work.

Now that was precisely the sort of "deal" in which the enterprise of Sir Ernest rejoiced. A competing publishing house against which he already had a grudge had made an unparalleled failure, and that was sufficient to make his mouth water at the idea of turning it into a colossal success: to score himself and score off somebody else by the same stroke was an irresistible magnet. Before accepting the proposal he did violence to his higher nature, and read the book. He disliked Freddie and found it extremely diverting.

Then he sat down to think. The monthly accounts of the Fiction Club had just come in and showed a heavy loss. He was pre-

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pared to finish with it altogether, but he hated to confess failure: it was a loss of prestige that he had been unable to make such a brilliant scheme pay. But he would wind it up without regret if he could only devise a blaze of triumph for its close. He had the offer of nineteen thousand copies of a most amusing book at a ludicrous price, and the English rights thereof. He had the services of the Literary Committee and the advertising power of his papers. A little star began to twinkle in the sky of his inventiveness. He accepted Messrs. Markham's offer and summoned his experts.

"Going from bad to worse," he said cheerfully, "and after next month we'll close down. But we'll have a splash first."

The few remaining thousands of the members of the Fiction Club received next week their *Monthly Review*. Instead of the Committee recommending three books, it recommended one only, for that one was of such superlative merit that it was idle to mention others with it. The book was *Muck*, and it was to be obtained only through the Fiction Club. It was by that renowned authoress Miss Ellaline Little, one of the Literary Committee, and she with great difficulty had been persuaded to allow her book to be the choice of the month. The review of it was by the master hand of Mr. Frederick Bearcroft. Therein Mr. Bearcroft alluded to the absurd rumour that had been current to the effect that he was about to bring a libel action against his great friend the authoress of *Muck*. Nothing was further from his thoughts, for if, as was generally supposed to be the case, the central figure of *Muck* was modelled on himself, all his previous successes in the literary line sank into nothingness compared with the privilege of having been the inspiration of the noblest work of fiction, the subtlest, most lyrical volume that had ever appeared in England. To him the figure of Ferdinand Bremen was cosmic. It incarnated all the modern tendencies and trends of thought; in its audacities and fearlessness it was typical of the culture, the high emprise of the most sublime twentieth-century mentality. The libraries had banned this book for they were always notoriously afraid of power and originality, and it was his privilege to put into the hands of the innumerable members of the Fiction Club, and their hands alone, the masterpiece. And so on. And so forth. Three pages.

Then the *Sunday Chronicle* proclaimed that all who were interested in the best literature of the day owed an undying debt of gratitude to Sir Ernest Hart, for having romantically rescued from oblivion this marvellous story. A dead set had been made against it in the Press, there had been a cowardly conspiracy of silence and he had smashed it up. The *Sunday Advertiser* said it was not sure whether it was right to create such figures of terror and appalling beauty but who could dictate to genius? *Muck* could only be obtained, it reminded its readers, from the Fiction Club. *Fashion* said that the libel action which would undoubtedly follow was already the talk of exclusive tea-tables.

The boom began and the remorseful libraries, starving for copies, came like the Prodigal Son to Sir Ernest. But he did not fall on their necks, he told them to be damned and not a single copy should they have. Day by day and week by week cohorts of new members joined the Fiction Club in order to obtain this volume, and it surpassed the sales of *Jezebel*. But such a coup, Sir Ernest concluded, could not be repeated. He dissolved his Committee, and the Fiction Club operated no more. But boodle in books? Why, yes, but you had to handle them.

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THE NEW DIRECTION IN IRISH LITERATURE

by Seán O'Faoláin

One does not see a wood any the clearer by felling the trees. Yet there is a great deal of that being done in the Ireland of today. There are for example many who would clarify the position of Anglo-Irish literature in modern Ireland by deriding almost everybody who has contributed to it. This curious, but not I think uncommon, *volte-face* in nationalistic feeling deserves consideration.

One must remember that the modern Irishman is, politically speaking, a very self-conscious person. He is like a man who having worked hard for success wakes up one morning to find himself famous and does not quite know what to do about it. The struggle for emancipation had, it is true, a long if intermittent history behind it, when, in a great burst of nationalistic fervour, the modern generation began another offensive. That history was indeed of great help in supporting and encouraging the latest phase of the struggle; but history has a way of suddenly closing a chapter and becoming out of date. Nobody was less prepared for political freedom than those who had been longest demanding it. It was always one of the most encouraging signs of the young Free State that its leaders did have some definite ideas as to what they wanted. The mass of the people, however, had not the slightest idea either of the responsibilities or the opportunities involved in their autonomy. And it was one of the next most encouraging signs to find that there were men in control in Ireland who were prepared to risk a great deal to teach the people what these responsibilities were.

Politics are politics, however, and one cannot, as Burke might have said, suddenly make a nation out of a people who have acted, and unhappily been treated, as a rabble for some three hundred years. There comes, too, a period when the pupil begins to stretch his wings for himself. The Mayo library affair is a case in point and one very pertinent to the present discussion. A Protestant girl was appointed on a County Library scheme. The local councillors objected. The Government in an attempt to be just refused to yield, and as a result the local public bodies refused to act at all and the whole scheme became moribund. Teachers went unpaid for months and the affairs of the county fell into disarray. Finally a commissioner was appointed, the librarian resigned strategically to undertake another post in Dublin, and Mayo has won its point at the expense of being governed by a commissioner. Other cases in point are the famous banning of Shaw's works in Galway, the banning last year in many places of the *Daily Mail* because it published a sympathetic review of a materialist life of Christ, and the seizure by Guards a few months ago, in Limerick, of the *Sunday Times* because it contained an article on birth-control by Lord Buckmaster.

These acts may be read as signs of intolerance and bigotry, but, Shaw excepted, there

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are after all various points of view on the propriety of such things and Ireland is not the only country in which a censorship has been, on occasion, stupidly enforced. It would be more correct to say they are the outcome of a kind of uninstructed Puritan Catholicism whose sin is that it will allow no point of view but one. There is, for instance, a movement on foot to ignore Bank Holidays in favour of Catholic holy days; and when in Wexford a non-Catholic councillor protested on behalf of the minority he was brusquely told "this is a Catholic country". Intolerant or not, however, these actions can be more interestingly considered in another way. They may be taken as so many blind gropings towards the creation of a national mind.

So we return to the new attitude toward Anglo-Irish literature. There appeared recently, from the pen of a professor of English in the National University, a book on Synge in which this attitude was formulated for the first time. It was a good book as far as Synge went, but it was marred by a propagandist abuse of almost every other Irish writer; or where it praised a few, it praised them because, like Synge (as distinct from the "Dublin set" as they were called—the AE-Yeats school), they "went into the huts of the people and lived with them". The implication is clear. Anglo-Irish literature is here held in disdain as a partial and inadequate interpretation of Irish life. The Celtic Twilight is to be thrown overboard and another formula, to which Synge is apparently the nearest available approximation, is to be substituted. The writer cries in substance, Away with Joyce, away with O'Casey, AE, O'Flaherty, Robinson, Yeats, and the rest.

Nobody can fail to be struck by the Russian parallel. A political ideal of what constitutes, or ought to constitute, Irish life is first erected. By this idol all literary efforts are to be judged, and to it everything of the freedom of the artist must be sacrificed. It would be odd to find a professor of literature announcing such a doctrine if one did not feel that what really was involved, though sadly confused with a welter of political and religious prejudices, was an appeal for greater artistic integrity. There has been, without any doubt, too much of the "Misty road to Killary" and the "Fiddler of Dooney". But when a professor goes so far astray as to confuse O'Casey and O'Flaherty with this too-easy, conventional treatment, into what morass, one asks in dismay, will the uneducated public (*e.g.* of Galway and Mayo) fall?

One may look therefore for a renewal of the struggle between the realists and idealists of Anglo-Irish literature. The realist attitude has been made clear by O'Casey and O'Flaherty, Joyce, O'Donnel, and others. What ideal picture will replace the Celtic Twilight—itself a lovely and not-to-be-regretted deception—remains to be seen. The Celtic Twilight was invented by a great poet and even in its imitators it had a charm; but poetry seems to have given way for a while to prose fiction and the drama, and a prosy deception is difficult to contemplate. If I were asked to suggest an example of the new ideal I should mention, reluctantly, because the thing is only in process of formation, and because these two books contain lovely things, *Dark Mountain* by Francis Gallagher, or *Stormy Hills* by Daniel Corkery. The reader would do well to judge for himself, but when he has read these two books he might take up what in my opinion is a far superior book to either, *Guests of the Nation* by Frank O'Connor, and draw his own conclusions.

In the first two books mentioned Irish life

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is idealized though not poeticized, the idealization being achieved mainly by a process of cunning omission. Mr. Corkery's book is the superior of the two in that he chooses to avoid rather than omit, and he has achieved remarkable success using only the simplest human themes. Sex, one observes, is not treated at all except as a lyric note; and sophisticated and unusual motifs are clearly not within the range of the interests of either author. This toning down to a low relief has disadvantages other than those of a restricted interest and delineation of Irish character as incomplete as that of the scorned "Dublin set". It almost inevitably leads the writer either to sentimentality or, when he suddenly embarks on dramatic themes, to melodrama —the very vice from which this kind of writing is a recoil. There is a story exemplary of the former in *The Stormy Hills* in which an old blind woman and her idiot son, forced into the city from the country farms, steal from the slums to revisit the valley of their youth; it is a story which a Frenchman *might* dare to attempt, treating it with an extreme of delicacy and irony.

On the other hand should a taste for these quieter motifs develop it might benefit Irish prose by eradicating from it the more stark and brutal elements to which it is partial. There is a great deal of the pendulum movement in the development of literary taste and it may be comforting to regard the present departure as nothing more than a momentary extreme. Between it and the next swing—during the next twenty years in fact—we may well see some of the best Anglo-Irish prose yet written.

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CHRONICLE AND COMMENT

T. S. Eliot Comes Home

How much T. S. Eliot will be able to give the Harvard undergraduates during his occupancy of the chair of poetry this coming year is perhaps a question; but there is no question that the attention which his visit to this country will excite will greatly increase the size of the audience of his work. We should say that nothing more salutary could happen to the course of literature and ideas in America. Eliot is one of the ablest spokesmen for a point of view and a set of ideas which are only slowly coming to occupy the position to which they are rightfully entitled, whether one rate their intrinsic value high, as we do, or judge them merely by their representative and traditional importance. It is well known that Eliot's position involves a drastic criticism of most of the things that have been the pride of the modern world, and bases itself firmly on a return to the older traditions of philosophy and faith. "The homeward march of the intellect of Europe" is a phrase that has been well applied to one manifestation of the world-wide movement of which T. S. Eliot is so effective and engaging a champion.

As has often been remarked, Eliot's influence during the dozen years of his public career stands in amazing contrast to the small volume of his work. He is gifted to a superlative degree with that peculiar quality of utterance which sends words straight to the souls of readers and makes of them disciples. Since 1920, when his first book appeared, his every pronouncement has been followed with close attention by an ever increasing number of alert minds, especially by young people in college or just out; one sometimes has the feeling that hundreds if not thousands of young Americans and Englishmen are building their lives around Eliot's work, and that their most momentous decisions can be settled by a casual paragraph of his. His books have been reread and studied as have few others, and his magazine, the *Criterion*, now completing its tenth year, has been without doubt the most influential publication of the post-war period. In poetry, of course, he has been the most widely imitated of all the moderns.

Eliot has certainly not been overlooked or underestimated, but the value of his work is far from exhausted; it is a matter for rejoicing that his return to his own country will surely add to his readers, of both the work he has already done and the work that still lies before him. What will his future work be? We have never been able to decide on the exact location of Eliot's tongue when he announced, in 1929, that he was at work on three books with these titles: *The School of Donne, The Outline of Royalism,* and *The Principles of Modern Heresy*; somehow it is difficult to picture Eliot calling a book an Outline of anything. But we may hope that the announcement was serious to the extent of signifying that Eliot will occasionally in the future concentrate into single substantial studies the energies which have thus far gone into a wide scattering of essays and reviews. The fragmentary and elliptical nature of his writing has often been criticized, but surely

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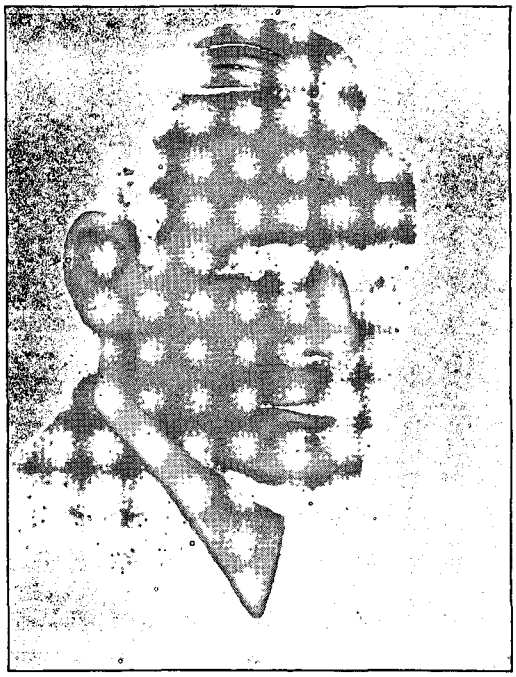

THE AUTHOR OF "THE WASTE LAND"

such a complaint is premature. If Eliot should complete his career without expanding the form of his work one might well deplore and castigate the waste. But there is every reason to believe that he is capable of sustained efforts, and that the brevity and the tantalizingly cryptic note of much of his work to date are due in part to the exigencies of a journalistic career and in part to the fact that his writing has been done in but momentary resting points in a period of the most phenomenal intellectual and spiritual development. After all, Eliot is only just reaching the age when much of the best criticism has been written. Sainte-Beuve did not begin the *Causeries de Lundi* until he was forty-six. Babbitt and More published their first volumes of criticism at forty-four and forty-five.

The foreçast of his projected books quoted above occurred in Eliot's famous preface to his volume of 1929, *For Lancelot Andrewes*. It was there that he shocked the majority of his admirers with the announcement that his position was "classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and anglo-catholic in religion". It would be hard to exaggerate the significance of this declaration of convictions. At a bound Eliot dissociated himself from the "moderns" with whom the form and much of the content of his poetry had caused him to be bracketed, and placed himself near the forefront of that other great stream of modern thought, the stream called "reactionary" and "anti-modern" by its enemies—and sometimes by its friends, as by Jacques Maritain; though not by Eliot, who dislikes that rather truculent and artificial contrasting of the "present" with the "past". The simple fact is that Eliot's acute sensibility and intellect have caused him to respond to the full to all the more vital of the influences which shape the modern spirit, and that as he neared forty he gradually shifted the center of his allegiance from one main current to the other.

THE AUTHOR OF "ASH-WEDNESDAY"

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There is no doubt that in the field of religion Eliot's decision carried incalculable weight—one would have to go at least as far back as Chesterton's of thirty years ago to find a parallel. Eliot's conversion constitutes him a little Oxford Movement in himself. His position in secular matters is no less provocative and fruitful, besides being more relevant for that large section of the public by whom Christianity is regarded as a sort of pathological retreat. Not only his royalism in politics and his classicism in literature, but his distributism in economics (he might disavow the word, but it fits his views so far as he has recorded them), and his scholasticism in philosophy (he has never publicly endorsed the whole Thomistic structure, but his leanings in logic, epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics are clear), constitute a body of thought which modernists are finding, and will increasingly find, they have to reckon with. There is every prospect that this latest restatement of the old wisdom, in which Eliot is playing so signal a part, will soon make a vast change in men's picture of the world. For Americans, T. S. Eliot is the most potent personality of his generation, perhaps of his day.

Bibliography of T. S. Eliot

The Sacred Wood	1920
Poems	1920
The Waste Land	1922
Homage to John Dryden	1924
Poems, 1909-1925	1925
For Lancelot Andrewes	1928
Dante	1929
Ash-Wednesday	1930

Eliot has written a number of prefaces, pamphlets, and lectures which would be essential to any detailed bibliography. The most important of them, together with a large part of *The Sacred Wood* and *For Lancelot Andrewes*, as well as the whole of the Dante and Dryden booklets listed above, have been collected in a volume to be published this month by Harcourt, Brace and Company, *Selected Essays of T. S. Eliot.*

Who Wrote Shaw's Plays?

In a recent number of *The Week-end Review*, Mr. Martin Armstrong proves that Dean Inge is the author of G. B. Shaw's works just as surely as Bacon wrote Shakespeare. He reaches this conclusion only after weeding out the possibilities of proving that Shaw's plays were written by Belloc, Chesterton, Mr. Richard Sickert, Mr. T. Earle Welby, and Mr. Bertrand Russell. The evidence he finally adduces to account for his conclusion seems to us no whit less final than any ardent Baconian can bring forth for his claims:—

"Let us turn to a phrase," says Mr. Armstrong, "a seemingly insignificant phrase, from Act I of *The Philanderer*. It is spoken by Charteris. '. . . noth*ing* else in the world, I assure you'. That phrase pulls the investigator up short, for we instantly detect our dramatist's name. . . ! 'Inge'. He is telling us that the true author's name is 'Nothing else in the world but Inge'. And that is not all. What do we find in the word 'world'? In the word 'world' occur the letters 'w' and 'r'. The particular Inge referred to, then, is the Inge craftily hinted at in the word 'world', namely W. R. Inge, Dean of St. Paul's.

"My next reference is to *St. Joan*. As one would expect, it is in the words of an English cleric . . . that the most striking clues are to be found. . . . We find him uttering these highly significant words: 'I will fling my cassock to the devil, and strangle the

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EDITH SITWELL

A drawing by Nina Hamnett, in the possession of Richard Sickert. From Nina Hamnett's book of reminiscences "Laughing Torso".

accursed witch'. The first phrase is an all but overt confession, and the passing references to *The Devil's Disciple* and *Arms and the Man* warn us to be on the look-out for more. Sure enough, from the second, third and seventh words—'will', 'fling', and 'the'—we get 'W. Inge'; from the eighth and fourteenth—'devil' and 'strangle'—we get 'Inge' again, while from the words 'strangle the accursed witch' emerges 'Shaw'.

"A little farther back we find . . . 'The matter, my lord, is that we English have been defeated'. In 'is', 'English', and 'have' the Dean's name again occurs, and as if that were not enough, we have not only the visible, but the audible, reference in the pun 'English', pronounced, of course, 'Inglish'. But by whom are 'we English' or 'Inglish' beaten? Turn to the stage direction at the top of the next page: 'He throws down his pen almost in tears'. Scattered, pell-mell, through that phrase of thirty-one letters we discover the words of our answer: 'Irish Shaw'. English Inge, then is beaten by Irish Shaw; in other words, Inge does the work, and Shaw, except from those who can read the Dean's covert hints, gets the glory."

Was ever plainer proof? But does Mr. Armstrong realize that he is laying up a handsome controversial issue for some doctoral candidate about the year 2232 A.D.?

Life Among the Artists

ALL exiled Left-Bankers and Café Royalists will make a dash for Nina Hamnett's *Laughing Torso*, which Richard Smith and Ray Long have just published here, partly to see how much of the *vie de Bohème* she has put in, and partly to guess the identity of the few names she occasionally suppresses discreetly. Life among the artists, it is plain, doesn't change much from generation to generation. Miss Hamnett's book, which comes down to 1932, is as much fun as Murger's any day.

Miss Hamnett knew Henri Gaudier-Brzeska and Sophie, whom all readers of *The Savage Messiah* will remember. When Henri went off to war and Miss Hamnett was marooned in London, homesick for Paris, she went to stay with Sophie in a Gloucestershire cottage. "She was certainly very eccentric," says Miss Hamnett. "She agreed to pay for the food if I would provide the drinks—port and sherry she liked. She had a horror of the moon, and if we walked out in the evening we had to walk either sideways or with our backs to it, as it might cast an evil influence upon us. . . . I

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slept in a top attic. . . . One morning at about three A.M., Sophie screamed up the staircase, 'If you had the chance would you have gone off with Henri?' And I screamed back, 'Yes!' After a moment's hesitation, during which I felt rather frightened, she went back to bed."

Miss Hamnett seems to have known everyone in literary and artistic Paris and London, and to have made portraits of most of them.

W. H. DAVIES

A painting by Nina Hamnett, from "Laughing Torso".

She fell in love with Paris on her first visit, and never stayed away from it for longer than she could help. The book gives innumerable sketches of her Paris life. "On Friday nights the literary people assembled at the Closerie des Lilas. The great man there was Paul Fort, and everybody sat around and listened to him. He wore a large black hat and long hair and certainly looked like a poet. . . . The poets did not really like the artists coming there, but we sat in a corner and looked impressed, so they got used to us."

She met the Sitwells and did a portrait of Edith, and at the Sitwells' house met W. H. Davies. "I was told that he was very shy and difficult to talk to. I had a golden dress on, with a wreath of autumn leaves around my head, and looked rather like a dissipated Bacchante after a little champagne. Davies was sitting on the floor and I sat down beside him. I talked of the relative values of beer and public-houses, and we got on admirably." So well, in fact, that she did a portrait of him in his "two rooms in Great Russell Square, filled with mice".

In France she knew Gide and Radiguet—but for that matter, whom doesn't she know? And Jean Cocteau told her a ghost story that deserves to become a classic: "There was a man one day waiting at the Gare du Nord for a train and a man walked past him whom he had not seen for years. He said to the man, 'Hullo, M., I thought you were dead,' and M. said, 'Do you believe in ghosts?' And the man who was waiting for the train said 'Of course not'. And M. said, 'Well, I do', and vanished into space".

Criticism in a Railway Carriage

THOSE who have had the somewhat breathtaking experience of being catechized concerning their native literature by a chance foreign acquaintance on, say, the Paris-Warsaw express, will need no introduction to Mr. Maurice Baring's story of the day he rode with a Russian and a Japanese student from Moscow to St. Petersburg.

The Russian student was expansive and talkative, and the Japanese was civil but reserved. The Russian could not talk Japanese, and the Japanese could, besides Japanese, only

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Cwojdinski, Europa

HENDRIK WILLEM VAN LOON

On his arrival in this country a few weeks ago, just before the publication of his latest book, "Van Loon's Geography", reviewed in this issue.

talk English. When the Russian talked to the Japanese the Japanese made a noise like a syphon; but the Russian, not contented with that, insisted on my interpreting his questions to the Japanese:

"Ask him if he knows English," said the Russian.

I did. The Japanese made a hissing noise. I thought that meant "yes".

"Ask him", continued the Russian, "if he has read any English books."

The Japanese said he had read the English lyric, but not the English epic.

"Ask him if he has read the great English modern authors," asked the Russian.

"Which?" I asked.

"Lord Byron, Oscar Wilde, Jerome K. Jerome, Mrs. Humphry Ward, Herbert Spencer and Jack London," said the Russian, all in one breath.

I put the question. The Japanese smiled, and said he had read the English novel.

"Which one?" asked the Russian (through me).

"All of it," answered the Japanese (through me).

"All of which one?"

"All the English novel."

"Dickens?"

A negative hiss.

"Thackeray?"

Another negative hiss.

"George Eliot?"

A double hiss.

"George Meredith?"

A vacant look.

"Marie Corelli?"

A raised eyebrow.

"Conan Doyle?"

Silence, which implied definite disapproval.

"Thomas Hardy?"

Complete silence.

I began to give it up.

The Japanese then opened a bag and produced a book printed in Japanese.

He pointed to it and said: "The English novel."

But as it was printed in Japanese and began at the end, we were not much the wiser.

He then produced another book, and, pointing to it, said: "The English lyric."

It seemed to be rather a long lyric.

This subject was then temporarily dropped in order to permit the Russian to explain to Mr. Baring what was worth reading in English literature.

He said that the greatest English writer after Lord Byron was Oscar Wilde. That Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat* was a very funny book, but that Jerome K. Jerome's masterpiece was *Mark Clever*. (I had not read it, to his immense surprise. I have read it since, and I do not think it is a very good book.) But the greatest English story-teller was Mrs. Humphry Ward. Her greatest book was *Marcella*, but *Sir George Tressady* was very good, too. There was no English drama. It was a pity.

"Shakespeare?" I said. And then I thought we might try the Japanese with Shakespeare,

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JANET LEWIS

A drawing by her brother Herbert Lewis. Miss Lewis (or Mrs. Yvor Winters) is the author of "The Invasion", published this month by Harcourt, Brace. "The Invasion" is a first novel which THE BOOKMAN *takes particular pleasure in recommending; we had the privilege of publishing some of Miss Lewis's earliest stories four years ago, and feel that the novel in every way fulfills their rich promise.*

but he only hissed.

"Shakespeare," said the Russian, never existed. "There was no such man."

"But his plays exist," I said.

"They are reactionary," said the Russian. "We are past all that. We no longer understand it. They are no longer acted."

I begged his pardon, there was one of them being acted in Moscow at the present moment —*Julius Cæsar*—I had seen it.

"All that", said the Russian, "is nothing. Shakespeare is nothing; besides which he never existed."

"Have you ever read *Hamlet*?" I asked.

"*Gamlet,*" he corrected me. Yes, he had read *Gamlet* at school. "We read that at school," he explained, "and then we forget it; it does not interest us—it is outside of our movement."

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The story quoted above appears in *Lost Lectures*, the latest delightful volume of Maurice Baring, whose career was sketched in the August issue of THE BOOKMAN. Another anecdote from the same source might have been designed expressly as a text for a little lecture on the progressive school movement—though it occurred long before that movement was heard of, and we shall forbear using it for that purpose. It concerns the University mathematics coach under whom Mr. Baring had the rare good fortune to work—a man who was "saturated in the amenities of the lower mathematics, and was redolent of old-world trigonometry."

He was so highly optimistic and so afraid of depreciating his pupils' capacity that he never believed they could get a sum wrong. If the sum seemed wrong—and it often did seem wrong—he took for granted the mistakes were either clerical or intentional, and he called them either slips or paradoxes; for instance, when one said that seven and four and six made nineteen, he would smile and say that he saw what one meant, but in this case the suggestion was perhaps a little daring for the examiners.

Literature of the Air

WE are now at about the same stage in our attitude toward the airplane as we were in our attitude toward the automobile in 1905, and it is only natural that the more recent means of transportation should be making its way into literature just as the outcome of Mr. Selden's patent did twenty-five years ago. Our most recent reminder of this is, of course, the choice of M. de St. Exupéry's *Night Flight* by the Book-of-the-Month Club; but that variously received novel is not the first of its kind. The French, who took both the automobile and the airplane out of American inventors' hands during the days of early development (one remembers Farman and Voisin and Bleriot and Panhard-Levasseur) have, as was to be expected, been unusually prolific in this "new" literature: the *Nouvelles Littéraires* is now running a series of articles on *La Littérature de l'air* by Paul Bléry, himself the author of two novels of the air, *A 1800 Tours* and *Sans Escale*; and such popular novels as Kessel's *Vent de Sable* and Weiss's *Cidna ou l'Express d'Istanbul* are fairly well known abroad. Among English writers there comes to mind Mr. David Garnett, whose *The Grasshoppers Come* created something of a stir in 1931, and who has more recently given us his delightful *A Rabbit in the Air*. In America, however, literature of the air has so far been largely restricted to a number of light magazine stories and to volumes recording the exploits of Colonel Lindbergh and Amelia Earhart.

In 1905, when such now forgotten family classics as C. N. and A. M. Williamson's *The Lightning Conductor* and *My Friend the Chauffeur* were gathering way, scoffers felt that the automobile in literature was being overdone. We quote from THE BOOKMAN for November of that year:—

A little while ago there appeared in the literary column of the New York *Tribune* a review of the Williamsons' *My Friend the Chauffeur*. It was not an enthusiastic review; in fact, the writer seemed to be in a disgruntled and irritated mood. *My Friend the Chauffeur* was pronounced a pretty poor sort of book, and anyway, there were entirely too many automobile stories, and people were growing tired. Thus we see that even in fiction the motor-car is a subject conducive to extremes. The reviewer in question was simply touched by motorphobia, and had the Williamsons written with the pen of men and of angels, it would have made little difference. When a reviewer with motorphobia in his blood hears the toot of the horn and sees the motor-car come spin-

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THEODORE DREISER IN 1911

The first of a series of pictures taken from old files of THE BOOKMAN. *This appeared in the issue for October 1911, when Dreiser was forty and had just published his second novel, "Jennie Gerhardt", and was working on "The Financier". A newspaper interview recently quoted Dreiser as saying that on finishing a book entitled "The Stoics" he will tackle "The Bulwark", the long awaited conclusion to the trilogy of which "The Financier" was the first volume, and "The Titan" the second. The same interview revealed that the passing years had brought another conviction to the author besides communism: "I am afraid that I suffer from a mental deficiency. If I could turn out a masterpiece in 30,000 or 40,000 words I should like to do it. But I've got to use a lot of words to tell my story". That seems to make it unanimous.*

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A scene from the forthcoming Paramount picture version of Ernest Hemingway's "A Farewell to Arms". Gary Cooper as Frederic, Helen Hayes as Catherine, Adolphe Menjou as Rinaldi.

ning down the highway of fiction, he feels it is his duty to spread a few literary horseshoe nails and bits of broken glass across the road. As a matter of fact, the grumble that people are growing tired of automobile stories is very far from the truth indeed. The man or woman who can spin a clever yarn with an automobile as the real hero, and bring in enough allusions to sooty spark-plugs, defective insulation, stripped gears and imperfect timing to satisfy the taste for local colour, need not look far for a market.

At the same time another problem arose in connection with the automobile novel which THE BOOKMAN took up at some length —the accusation that authors were using their pages to advertize specific makes of car. The Williamsons, for instance, were suspected in *The Lightning Conductor* of advertizing the advantages of the rising Napier (as well as an automobile tire and a toilet soap), and on the other hand were actually sued by the manufacturer responsible for the "German horror" which brought discomfort to the hero and heroine in the early pages of the book. Perhaps Mr. Garnett will yet have to answer for having had such a good time in a Puss Moth, but somehow in this day and age we doubt it.

The Morgantic Mystics

THE astonishing success of Charles Morgan's *The Fountain* in this country gives rise to reflection. The writing is distinguished without being brilliant; the love story, although extra-marital, is almost sternly unvoluptuous; except for the old Dutchman, van Leyden, the characters are not highly individualized. The setting alone has novelty: an internment camp for English prisoners in Holland.

But on the whole it is hardly a book one would expect to find on the list of best sellers. Before one has read very long, however, the clue to the mystery turns up. Mr. Morgan is bringing light to the Gentiles through his hero, Lewis Alison. In fact a neater trick, if only it could be successfully done, than the author has attempted would be hard to find: Lewis Alison is a "secular mystic", and those who follow him with becoming docility will find that they may have, not only the Light that never was on sea or land, but all the kingdoms of this earth as well.

Now this is a highly engaging thought: that only a little elementary fastidiousness combined with no slight misapprehension as to what the pre-Christian mystics were teaching will transform one into a contemplative, and at last into an initiate of mysteries, and since Mr. Morgan is specious to the point of being persuasive, we have no doubt that little groups of Morganites are springing up here and there all over the country.

Here is Lewis at his concentrated deepest.

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Will all true Platonists (in particular) please note: "As time went by, this distinction [between the contemplative ideal itself and the extreme practices of the Middle Ages and the Counter-Reformation] became more and more clear to Lewis. It was, he saw, the link between the conditions of the modern world, wherein faith in revealed truth was no longer predominant, and the philosophic mysticism of the pre-Christian era. To establish a citadel within the sensible world without first annihilating the senses, to build the spirit not with the deaths of mind and body but with their selective and disciplined vitality, to lead the whole man . . . into that peace which is invulnerable and requires no immortal armour—these were his purposes". And here one may break off to say that if, as the originator of a sect, Mr. Morgan wishes to confuse methods with purposes, that is his affair, but that he should not too lightly commit, by implication, the pre-Christian mystics to the same confusion.

But to return, the Christian saints were "bound to the fulfilment of their faith, as a rich man to his riches, but a modern contemplative, excluded from Christianity [*i.e.*, being too "reasonable" to be Christian], must be like Socrates, bound to nothing, afraid of no encounter, capable of no loss but of his own integrity. . . . Though he were persuaded by reason or intuition of the immortality of the soul . . . he must be prepared for reason to unmake what it had made".

And later, pre-Christian Greek meeting Greek, Lewis learns at the feet of his mistress's husband, Narwitz:—

" 'Then the purpose of a contemplative is to develop the faculty of wonder?' Lewis asked. 'Is that the imitation of God?' "

The answer springing to the lips of all Mr. Morgan's Modern Contemplatives will be "Yes"!

This truly must be materialism's last stand. The Age of Reason has faded back into its twilight; it was a dawn that had no day.

Another scene from the screen version, shortly to be released, of "A Farewell to Arms": Ferguson (Mary Phillips) and Frederic (Gary Cooper) in an army hospital.

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Margaret Ayer Barnes's "Westward Passage" as produced in motion pictures by RKO-Pathé. The members of the cast shown are Juliette Compton, Laurence Olivier, Bonita Granville, and Ann Harding.

But the die-hards of reason are not to be routed. They will have the best of both worlds or know the reason why. If it must be done by misreading Plato, ignoring Plotinus, and extracting in a gingerly fashion those Buddhistic precepts which do not stress too strongly the phenomenal world as illusion, why then they will do it in that way.

Perhaps a handful of readers, here and there, will like this item culled from the *Publishers' Weekly*, in which Mr. Knopf, who publishes Cather and Undset, as well as Morgan, offers advice on Undset's *The Burning Bush* to booksellers: "I believe you can safely recommend it to anyone who liked *Shadows on the Rock*, and to almost anyone who liked *The Fountain*. Certainly to everyone who, having read *The Fountain*, has come back to you and asked for more". Or perhaps better, to those who have come back and asked for an antidote.

Pity and Terror, American Style

Mr. Edward J. O'Brien's selection of American stories, printed from May 1, 1931, to April 30, 1932, which he believes "may fairly claim a position in American literature" has just been published—*The Best Short Stories: 1932* (Dodd, Mead. $2.50)—and in his introduction Mr. O'Brien sums up his findings since he undertook his arduous and important task in 1914.

The years from 1915 to 1922 were, he admits, lean years. A prosperous period found "machine-made" stories in command of the field, and unadventurous editors. From 1922 to 1930 came the shaping period. "I sought hard", the anthologist says, "for whatever was stirring on the face of these very muddy waters, and I found Sherwood Anderson. A little later I found Ernest Hemingway. These were two homeless artists who loved

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their own people. Their own people did not seem to care much for them. Little by little they won a foothold and found an audience in American youth.... This youth was homeless and looking for something in which it could take root. It found something in Anderson and Hemingway."

If he is right, the work of Mr. O'Brien's newly rooted young writers will be found to have, behind whatever superficial differences the authors' personal experiences and individual backgrounds may lend their work, the hard-boiled tenderness toward their creatures which is the most noticeable characteristic of the two authors whom Mr. O'Brien mentions. This attitude is most easily (and, many writers will feel, most justly) taken when the characters to be observed are immature, inarticulate, or insane; and it is presumably this fact, and not a pure natural perversity, which has given us, in book after book of Mr. O'Brien's selections, heroes and heroines who are adolescents, children, peasants (on their native soil or transplanted), "wage-slaves", hoboes, madmen, and half-wits. It is difficult to feel pity for one's social or spiritual superiors, and next to impossible to feel tenderness for them; and since real detachment is rapidly becoming no virtue at all and being replaced, for artistic purposes, by a pseudo-detachment which is continually cracking under the weight of the story to show the solid sentimentality below, the hero *qua* hero seems fated to disappear from American fiction. There are, as a matter of fact, only two candidates for the rôle of hero in this collection: the "foreigner" of Bill Adams's astonishingly sentimental story; and the central figure of Dudley Schnabel's *Load*, in many ways the best character in the book.

If we have given the impression that we are deluded into thinking that Messrs.

Barbara Stanwyck as the heroine of Edna Ferber's "So Big", in Warner Brothers' screen dramatization of the popular novel.

Anderson and Hemingway were the first to bring tough tenderness into American fiction we must make all haste to correct it: the attitude is older than Bret Harte. At a time when there was some hope that it might die out and be replaced by a maturer plant, Mencken found it, cherished it, and brought it back to life. Anderson and Hemingway came bringing the simple declarative sentence; which does, indeed, reproduce as nearly as the printed page can the American monotone, but which performed the doubtful service of throwing American letters wide open to any sensitive high school lad. It therefore seems eminently fitting that the story in which all these latter-day perfections meet in a *reductio ad absurdum*, in which the hero is at once an adolescent, a hobo, and a *mutilé*, in which a tale of raw physical agony and primitive pathos is introduced and ended by passages of a stereotyped jour-

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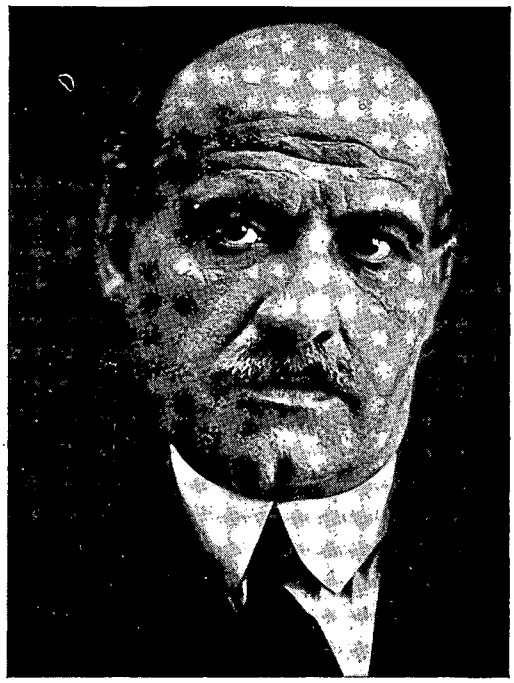

JOSÉ ORTEGA Y GASSET

The Spanish philosopher whose book "The Revolt of the Masses", reviewed in this issue, is attracting wide attention.

nalistic irony as machine-made as anything in the fiction Mr. O'Brien abhors, George Milburn's *Heel, Toe and a 1, 2, 3, 4* should have appeared originally in *The American Mercury*.

That good writing can be done and is being done even in these shackles is demonstrated over and over in the new anthology, in which seventeen out of the twenty-five stories fit easily into the tough-tender category. Leo Ward's *The Quarrel* (which is more than half out of the tradition), Meridel Lesueur's study of adolescence, *Spring Story*, Scammon Lockwood's excellent *An Arrival at Carthage*, Morley Callaghan's *The Red Hat*, all go nearly as far as this kind of story will go. But one can be fairly sure that a great story will never be written in this *genre*; it will be possible only, we should say, by infusing into it elements from a sounder tradition. Depressingly enough, the few ante- and post-Bret Harte tales which have slipped through the sieve of Mr. O'Brien's standards—such as Komroff's *Napoleon's Hat Under Glass*, and Helena Lefroy Caperton's *The Honest Wine Merchant*—have very little to recommend them except their pseudo-classical *conte* form.

For its completely individual attitude, for distinction of form, for clarity and beauty of style, Alvah C. Bessie's *Horizon*, from the *Criterion*, stands first among these stories. In last year's collection the same author's *Only We Are Barren* was easily best. We venture the prediction that he will soon be the best writer of short fiction in the country—or, rather, recognized for the excellent writer he is.

* * *

Doubtless a story to which we should like to draw attention has already come under Mr. O'Brien's eyes as he performs his enormous labour of following all the magazines of a vast fiction-loving continent. For readers who can still bear to feel admiration for a central character, who find the catharsis of pity effectual only in the presence of tragic nobility, may we point out that in that superdepartment store for the purveying of machine-made fictional goods, *The Saturday Evening Post*, in the issue for June 11, will be found a story by Alice Duer Miller, *"They Shall Not Pass"*. There are gangsters in this story; they are not its heroes. There is a heroine who acts nobly and decisively; she is reticent, not dumb. There is a tradition; it is upheld, not assaulted. There is social commentary, not sociological documentation. And the effect on the uncorrupted reader will not be to throw him into a voluptuous and sickly humanitarian swoon.

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Crosswords and Dictionaries

ANYONE who assumes that the crossword puzzle has either gone the way of all fads or has become merely a perfunctory feature of the commuter's newspaper may be interested to learn that Simon & Schuster's crossword puzzle books have been selling at the rate of more than 70,000 copies a year for the past four years and are still doing so. Apparently American women still need something mild to occupy the time that used to be devoted to conchology and pyrography, and American men are still hard put to it to know what to do with the five unoccupied minutes that they have saved by their latest superhuman effort. In any event, this year Messrs. Simon & Schuster are bringing out the twenty-fifth of their Cross-Word Puzzle Book series, and even the Oxford University Press has entered the crossword field. In the latter case, however, there is a further reason.

When he took up the question of the crossword puzzle in *Only Yesterday*, Mr. Frederick Lewis Allen mentioned, among "cross-word widows" in Chicago and "cross-word sermons" in Pittsburgh, the sudden public interest in *Roget's Thesaurus*, and the installation of dictionaries on the main line trains of the B. & O. The Oxford Press, which makes a lot of money out of dictionaries and uses it to help publish excellent works of scholarship, has apparently seen a way to capitalize this phenomenon: on the jacket flaps of its own crossword puzzle book it has included generous advertisements of the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* and of Fowler's *Modern English Usage*. If the British publishers succeed in selling more dictionaries and more Fowlers in this way, more power to them. For the dictionary is an excellent one; and Mr. Fowler, as readers of Mr. Dangerfield's article in the July BOOKMAN know, can be considerably more enter-

THE STRANGE RIVER

"At the bottom of the flight of steps which he had to go down, the cobbles of the road seemed to him like tiny pebbles carefully arranged between minute pavements. . . . Lower still than the alley, hidden behind the parapet of the embankment, the Seine rolled on its course like the course of one's secret thoughts."—A view of the Seine chosen by the French publishers of "The Strange River", Julian Green's new novel, to represent the central scene of the story.

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MR. BERNARD SHAW DEFYING TIME

A caricature by Thomas Derrick in "Everyman", the London weekly.

taining to the forewarned reader than even crossword puzzle books themselves.

The Playboy Philosopher

"WHY don't you suicide? What is it that impels you to keep up the battle of life?" It must have been a shock even to the philosophical Dr. Will Durant when Messrs. Ray Long and Richard R. Smith recently asked him to put these rather abrupt questions to some fifty public figures ranging from Helen Wills Moody to Mahatma Gandhi. Dr. Durant, however, was not abashed; in fact, in the words of his publishers, he "gladly took up the challenge". The wonder is not so much in the names of those who answered his questions as in the fact that there were any answers at all; for the good Doctor's 600-word letter began with the winning words: "Dear Mr. Shaw: Will you interrupt your work for a moment and play the game of philosophy with me?"

Well, some people played and some people didn't. Among those who did are Mr. H. L. Mencken, who says "I go on working for the same reason a hen goes on laying eggs", in part of what Dr. Durant calls "a delightful piece, which I print here with the uneasy conscience of a man stealing a gem"; Mr. Sinclair Lewis, who says "It is an error to believe that there is any need of religion to make life seem worth living. . . . Satisfaction comes from functioning healthily"; Helen Wills Moody, who says "The only thing I know I really want is some means of exercising the restlessness which seems to be continually in my heart"; and Mr. Carl Laemmle, who pays the good Doctor a pretty compliment by writing "I am going to disappoint you because my answers, while truthful, will be utterly bromidic. At least that is how I fear they will impress a mind like yours".

Among those who refused to play are what Dr. Durant, in his symposium *On the Meaning of Life*, calls "lazy people"; Arthur Schnitzler, who merely sent a *Buch der Spruche und Bedenken*; H. G. Wells, who wearily pointed to all his books; Eugene O'Neill, who said it was all in *Mourning Becomes Electra*; Count Hermann Keyserling, who replied "When stating my ideas, I prefer using my own setting to providing material for the book of another author"; and Bernard Shaw, who countered with some questions of his own: "How the devil do I know? Has the question itself any meaning?" A fair query, we should say.

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THOSE NONSENSICAL VICTORIANS

PART ONE

by Frances Wentworth Knickerbocker

NONSENSICAL? It is the only thing the Victorians have not been called! But to say that the Victorians were the creators of nonsense is not paradox but mere fact. For in this centenary year of Lewis Carroll we may fitly recall that it was "those earnest Victorians", as Sir Esmé Wingfield-Stratford's brilliant study termed them, who gave us *The Nonsense Books, The Rose and the Ring, The Bab Ballads, Alice in Wonderland, Alice Through the Looking Glass,* and *The Hunting of the Snark*. Perhaps as we return to roam for a little in those enchanted lands, we shall discover that only the greatly in earnest can be greatly nonsensical—that it takes uncommon sense to write real nonsense.

*Un*common sense, please note, and *real* nonsense. For real nonsense, of course, is not just no-sense, any more than it is satire, or parody, or allegory. It is quite another sort of sense—child's sense; whereas satire and the rest are grown-up sports or arts. The Thackeray of the *Book of Snobs*, the Gilbert of the operas, the Lewis Carroll of the parodies on Tennyson and Swinburne had, for the time, put away childish things. And when we reach the era of *The Yellow Book* and *The Decay of Lying*, the child has become a sophomore. For satire, parody, allegory, all have a context, an outside meaning. But real nonsense, like music, means nothing *outside* itself. Nonsense is its own meaning, as its creators have always known. So Edward Lear protested to those commonsensical readers who would find caricatures and symbolical meanings in his verses that his aim was "nonsense pure and absolute"; and Lewis Carroll apologized to the solemn critics who insisted on interpreting *The Hunting of the Snark* as an allegory of man's search for virtue, "I'm very much afraid I didn't mean anything but nonsense".

But how came nonsense pure and absolute to spring up in the very midst of mid-Victorian earnestness? What in the world was the first *Book of Nonsense* doing in 1846, amid the tumult of Tractarianism, Chartism, and Corn Law Repeal? Now of course Victorian nonsense did not grow out of nothing. There was, for instance, Mother Goose. Poor Mother Goose, loved and chanted for generations, to be dissected and psycho-analyzed by ours! With all her faults, we may still admit her claim to be the grandmother of the Jumblies and Tweedledum. We need not argue learnedly; we need only chant rhythmically:

> Barber, barber, shave a pig.
> How many hairs will make a wig?
> Four-and-twenty, that's enough,
> Give the poor barber a pinch of snuff.

That is elemental nonsense: nonsense of the nursery.

Yes, there had been children's poetry. There had been *Songs of Innocence*—but did anyone in Blake's time read "Little Lamb" or "Tyger, Tyger" to a child? We know that

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they did read Isaac Watts's *Divine and Moral Songs for Children*, and Jane Taylor's *Hymns for Infant Minds*. Think of the solemnity of children's reading in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries! Sir Esmé Wingfield-Stratford has culled from such treasuries as Mrs. Turner's *Cautionary Stories* and Mrs. Sherwood's *Fairchild Family* samples of infant crime and punishment that fairly justify him in terming "the Lord" of our forefathers the tormentor of children. And even when writers for children were not terrifying, how endlessly edifying they were! We need go no further back than our mothers' childhood. I have beside me a little faded brownish book, *The Illustrated Book of Songs for Children*. On the fly-leaf is laboriously inscribed:

To dear Sallie
with Leila's love
Thanksgiving Day, 1865.

1865: the year of *Alice in Wonderland*. Some of the titles are innocuous: *A Visit to the Lambs, Come Here, Little Robin, Butterflies Are Pretty Things*. But listen to these!

The Obstinate Chicken whose Fate so gory
Makes this a melancholy Story,

and

Now, Maidens, We Press on
Your notice a Lesson.

A few are old songs, *I Love Little Pussy, Sleep, Baby, Sleep*, which my own children sing. But not *What a Child Has*:

Now tell me, darling, what have you?
"I have clothes, and on each foot a shoe;
Father and mother, life and glee,
So good has God been unto me".

And not *All Have a Work to Do*, a dialogue between a child and a stream which concludes,

So little child, your duty do
In cheerfulness all day;
And you, with me, shall then be bless'd
With flowers upon your way.

WHEN LEAR WAS SERIOUS

An illustration from Edward Lear's first book, the entirely serious "Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidae, or Parrots, the Greater Part of Them Species Hitherto Unfigured". The book, of massive size and gorgeously tinted, was published when Lear was twenty and beginning his career as a draughtsman and landscape painter. It was dedicated thus: "To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty this Work is by Her Most Gracious Permission Humbly Dedicated by Her Majesty's Most Dutiful and Faithful Subject E. Lear". This picture and the two on the opposite page form an interesting series which might be called "The Evolution of a Nonsense Artist".

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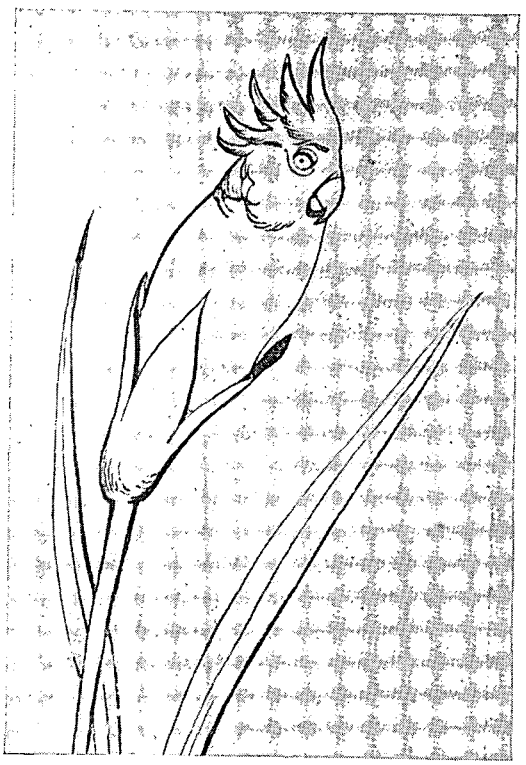
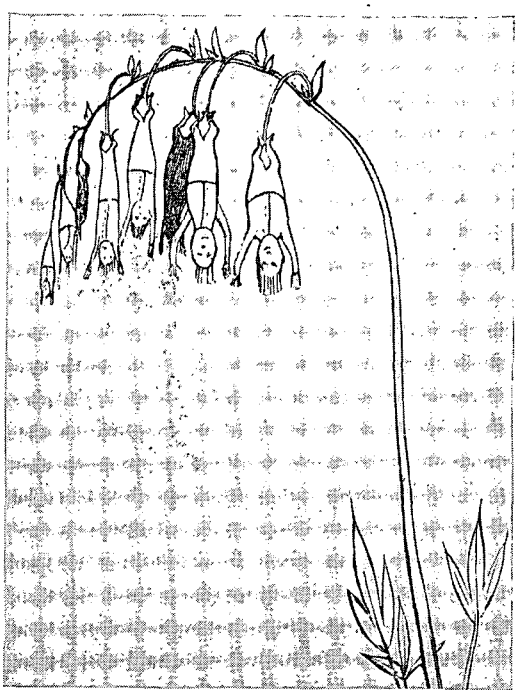
The woodcuts which depict the savage hawk pouncing upon the obstinate chicken, the ringleted youth musing under the gnarled trees by the dark stream—how grim and dreary were the illustrations of our mothers' childhood! My own children have sung to tatters my mother's *Mother Goose*; they have revelled shamelessly in the thefts of Taffy and the dire fate of Tabbykins; but on those woodcuts of the grinning spider pursuing the helpless fly, I have firmly shut the book. Since first I saw them, I have never felt the same toward spiders.

What Tenniel and Arthur Frost did to the woodcut in their illustrations of *Alice* and *The Snark* is the counterpart of what Lewis Carroll did to children's stories. When Alice



COCKATOOCA SUPERBA

From Lear's "Nonsense Botany". Here we see the serious delineator of natural history mixing his species with humorous effect.



MANYPEEPLIA UPSIDOWNIA

And finally, we see Lear succumbing altogether to the marvellous madness that has so delighted the world for nearly a hundred years.

"crossed her hands on her lap as if she were saying lessons" and began to repeat,

> How doth the little crocodile
> Improve his shining tail,

she gave us Isaac Watts, not parodied (anyone can do that), but transformed. And we, remembering that grave divine, cry out delightedly, "Bless thee, Bottom, how thou art translated"!

It was out of this sober setting that the first *Book of Nonsense* appeared. Like *Alice in Wonderland*, it was just an incident—a blessed accident—in the life of a very earnest man. We have all heard of the Reverend Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, author of the *Condensation of Determinants* and other abstruse mathematical works. But who that has not hunted his shy figure through li-

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"OH, I'M LEAR"

A photograph taken about 1853, a few years after the publication of the first nonsense book.

braries knows Edward Lear the landscape-painter? The youngest of a family of twenty-one children, he spent his boyhood poring over books of natural history. He was only fifteen when he had to begin to draw "for bread and cheese". At nineteen, he was employed as draughtsman in the Zoölogical Gardens, and at twenty he published his first book, *The Family of the Psittacidæ*, which sounds like nonsense but means parrots! These exquisitely coloured pictures began his career as an artist. Other naturalists employed him, and Lord Derby invited him to his estate, to draw the rare birds in his collection for a volume on the Knowsley menagerie. It was during the four happy years at Knowsley that *The Book of Nonsense* was born. Later, he recalled the scene:

"Long years ago, in days when much of my time was passed in a country house, where children and mirth abounded, the lines beginning 'There was an old man of Tobago' were suggested to me by a valued friend as a form of verse lending itself to limitless variety for rhymes and pictures; and thenceforth the greater part of the original drawings and verses for the *First Book of Nonsense* were struck off with a pen, no assistance ever having been given me in any way but that of uproarious delight and welcome at the appearance of every new absurdity."

Here we catch nonsense in the making: a childlike, child-loving, serious man, pen in hand, and a group of children hanging uproariously over his shoulders. It is a safe guess that when Dr. Isaac Watts penned "How doth the little busy bee", there were no mirthful children hanging over *his* shoulders!

In her preface to *The Letters of Edward Lear*, Lady Strachey tells how the grown-ups at Knowsley discovered this shy genius. Old Lord Derby complained one day that his grandsons constantly left him as soon as dinner was over. "It is so much more amusing downstairs", they pleaded. "That young fellow in the steward's room who is drawing the birds for you is such good company!" And so the young fellow was invited to dine upstairs, to the equal delight of Lord Derby and his noble guests, who became Lear's lifelong friends and patrons. Of his gift for comradeship, the friend to whom these letters were written says:

"Lear was a delightful companion, full of nonsense, puns, riddles, everything in the shape of fun, and brimming with intense appreciation of nature as well as history."

Worthy of the pen of Lytton Strachey is the story of Lear's first visit to Queen Victoria, who had engaged him to give her drawing lessons. Lear was awkward and stout, with a bushy countenance so like that

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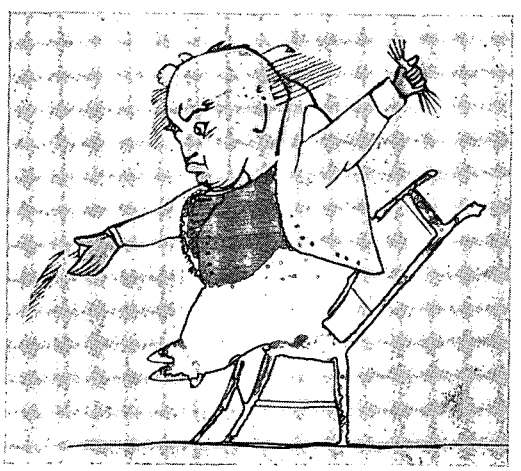
of his own "old man with a beard" that the "two Owls and a Hen, four Larks and a Wren" might easily have built their nests in *his* beard. Rather roughly dressed, he went to the door at Osborne, and simply said he wished to see the Queen. The equerry, convinced that he was a lunatic, blandly inquired his business, to which he replied simply, "Oh, I'm Lear".

To his minutely accurate "topographical" landscape paintings and drawings, so remote from our modern Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, Lear devoted his life as faithfully as did Dodgson to his formulae. Yet during all his lonely wandering years of exile in foreign lands, of exhausting work and frail health, his letters give us glimpses of that other Lear, the "old Derry-down-Derry, who loved to see little folks merry". And it is so that we always think of him, with Lord Derby's grandchildren leaning over his shoulder, mirthfully watching his swift pen sketch:



A typical example from Lear's first Book of Nonsense. The limerick, with the characteristic misused word in the last line, runs as follows:—

There was an old man of Peru
Who never knew what he should do;
So he tore off his hair,
And behaved like a bear,
That intrinsic old man of Peru.

As recorded in the text, Lear's humour made him a delightful friend. When he was away on his many journeys as a landscape artist he enlivened his letters with jokes and humorous pictures. The drawing above, "Mr. Lear Riding on an Elephant", was sent from India in 1879 in a letter to Chichester Fortesque.

There was an Old Man who said "Hush!
I perceive a young bird in this bush!"
When they said, "Is it small?" he replied, "Not at all,
It is four times as big as the bush!"

Of course the drawings are half the fun, more than half, I think, when I contemplate the "regular brute of a Bee", the "horrible Cow", the—but you know them! Indeed I am tempted to assert (leaving it to some doctoral dissertation on *The Nature of Nonsense* to find the exceptions) that real nonsense is a word-and-picture art. Try to imagine Lear's limericks without his drawings, or *The Bab Ballads* without Gilbert's sketches, or *The Rose and the Ring* without Thackeray's portraits of Prince Bulbo and Countess Gruffanuff! Here author and artist are actually one; in *Alice* they were two, but one in spirit. Did you ever try to read *Alice* with any

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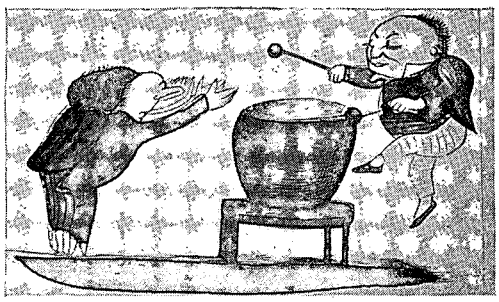


"WHAT CHILD CAN RESIST IT?"

The drawing for the limerick given in the text, "There was an old man with a gong".

other illustrations than Tenniel's? It just isn't the same.

But to return to Lear and the limerick. When Mr. de la Mare, in his delightful essay on *Carrollian Nonsense*, asserts that there are two distinct orders of limericks, "the mere limerick and the Lear limerick", he means, I take it, that when Lear adopted "the old man of Tobago", he created the nonsense-limerick. The other kind—the kind we have all perpetrated—may be funny, or witty, or naughty. (I am not going to quote one of those; you know them!) The Lear limerick is none of these. It is, as its author declared, "innocent mirth". Well might that earnest Victorian, John Ruskin, praise the *Nonsense Book*, as "the most beneficent and innocent of all books". You never roar with laughter at a Lear limerick. You shake, or softly chuckle. And unless you are child enough to pore over them, you had better take them in small doses. Theirs is a flavour so delicate that it is easily lost. If you read too long, you become aware of the too-often repeated last line. Indeed, though it may be heresy to confess it, I think that the best are those that achieve a real, in fact a violent, climax. What child, young or old, can resist

There was an Old Man with a gong
Who bumped at it all the day long;
But they called out, "Oh, law! You're a horrid old bore!"
So they smashed that Old Man with a gong.

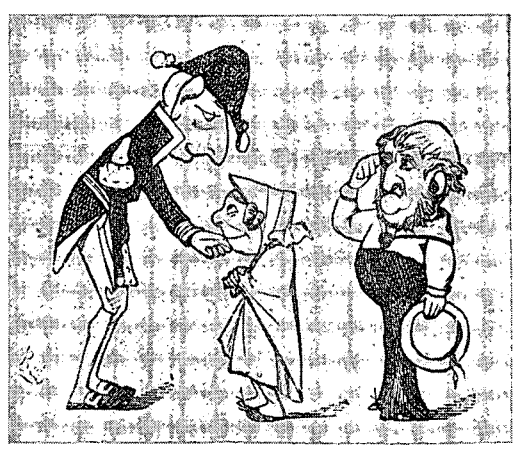
It is only grown-up psychologists, by the way, who confuse violence in literature with violence in life. The child seldom does, and so emerges unscathed from *Mother Goose* and *Strewelpeter*.

One secret of the Lear limerick is that, like *Mother Goose*, it is rhythmically perfect—try to leave out the *at* in that second line, for instance. It was no accident that Lear was naturally so musical that his singing, though untrained, moved his hearers to tears. Many of his happiest word-coinages are either sheer sound-play, "that ombliferous person of Crete", or rhyme-fun:

There was an Old Man of Kamschatka
Who possessed a remarkably fat Cur. . . .

There was an old Lady of Winchelsea
Who said, If you needle or pin shall see. . . .

Of course, triple rhyming was no invention of Lear's. Byron and Browning, to mention no others, could beat him at that game. It



"And does it want a wedding ring?
It was a tempting ickle sing."

An illustration by W. S. Gilbert for "Captain Reece", one of the Bab Ballads.

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belongs to satire as much as to nonsense. But in word-creation, that essence of nonsense, only the author of *Jabberwocky* could rival him (with a bow to the teller of the *Just So Stories*). And Lear's word-coupling —the mating of a perfectly sober and respectable word with an utterly absurd one: "scroobious and wily", "quite galoobious and genteel"—is an effect all his own, as comic as a bishop wearing a derby. No wonder that the writer of this tone-poem:

All the Blue-Bottle Flies began to buzz at once in a sumptuous and sonorous manner, the melodious and mucilaginous sounds echoing all over the waters, and resounding across the tumultuous tops of the transitory titmice upon the intervening and verdant mountains with a serene and sickly suavity known only to the truly virtuous. . . .

could end a letter of felicitation, "Yours absquoxiously and full of blomphious and umphisidious congratulations".

Like almost all artists, especially nonsense artists, Lear could not explain. When his friend wrote to ask, at the request of the mother of some children who had been feasting upon the *Nonsense Book*, "*Did* the young lady in the last picture [The Young Lady of Clare, who was madly pursued by a bear] fall—or will she fall—on her face or her back?" he replied, "I will ask Dr. Phillimore or some one of deep thought, for I do not myself know what that curly burly woman ended in!"

Indeed, as Alice would say, there is "no sort of use" in trying to explain nonsense. Try, for instance, to explain

There was a young lady in blue
Who said, "Is it you? Is it you?"

"Try to imagine the Bab Ballads without Gilbert's sketches." Gilbert's frontispiece to the first edition of the Bab Ballads.

When they said, "Yes, it is", she replied only
"Whizz!"
That ungracious young lady in blue.

Could anything be more senseless? And yet, have you not met charming young ladies whose conversation, though more gracious, was not a bit more sensible?

For nonsense, I repeat, has meaning but no explanation. And so if you are one of the fortunate who can chant *The Jumblies* and *The Owl and the Pussy Cat*, rejoice and be exceeding glad. For no one, not even a College Entrance Board Examiner, can ask you to define a Quangle-Wangle or to locate the Hills of the Chankly Bore.

(*In the second part of "Those Nonsensical Victorians", to be published next month, Mrs. Knickerbocker discusses Thackeray and Lewis Carroll.*)

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VANCE THOMPSON AND "M'LLE NEW YORK"

by Frank C. Hanighen

One of the early years of that decade in which pink tried to become purple marked the return of young Vance Thompson from Europe. The late eighties on the Continent had been far from dull and a young Princeton graduate who had studied at Jena and Heidelberg, who had listened to Verlaine in a café on the Left Bank, had walked the streets of Brussels with Maeterlinck, talked to Rodenbach in Bruges, and been the frequenter of all the salons and *cénacles* of literary Paris, naturally found New York barbarous and stupid.

To a university man with literary inclinations of so "advanced" a kind the leading dons of Columbia were far from stimulating. Brander Matthews was writing *Vignettes of Manhattan*, timidly introducing shy glimpses of squalor and ennui, and when the critics appraised them as Gallic and advanced Thompson must have smiled. Then there was Professor Harry Thurston Peck, the editor of THE BOOKMAN, who tried so hard to be fair to Nietzsche, who frankly liked Sainte-Beuve and audaciously championed Zola—an academic *enfant terrible* in strait-laced New York. But the young expatriate who had just come from a Paris where Zola had been passé for years, who knew intimately Remy de Gourmont and Ernest La Jeunesse, could find naught but boredom in all this professorial patter.

The magazines were rigidly Victorian. Richard Watson Gilder, the editor of the *Century*, rejected a story for its mention of a boy's nipple. Robert Barr, Justin Huntly McCarthy, Mrs. W. R. Clifford, Stanley Weyman—such were the names which ruled the fiction readers of a nation. There were tremendous flutters about Father Tabb's poems, Hamilton Wright Mabie was pontificating, and Frank Danby was uneasily regarded as a disciple of George Moore. To Thompson, who had just entertained himself with Paul Bonnetain's latest novel, *Charlot s'amuse*, such a panorama must have heightened the sense of contempt which in ex-Left-Bankers needs little encouragement.

Perhaps because it seemed the least unexciting of several alternatives, Vance Thompson sought the field of journalism. He became first a reporter, then dramatic critic, on the *Commercial Advertiser*. There he found kindred spirits in James Huneker, likewise lately returned from Europe, and a number of other young men, interested in modern literature, music and art, among them G. H. Payne and C. H. Meltzer.

Thompson seems to have made a tremendous impression on his fellow journalists. Many of them still talk with awe of his appearance in editorial rooms. He would stroll in to his desk garbed exquisitely in the finest of London tailored suits, a long paddock coat, bright yellow gloves, a top hat of the most English design and, to crown all, a monocle. There also grew up a legend of this toff as a reportorial superman. His appearance at the Molineux trial provoked the *Evening Post* to comment. According to that

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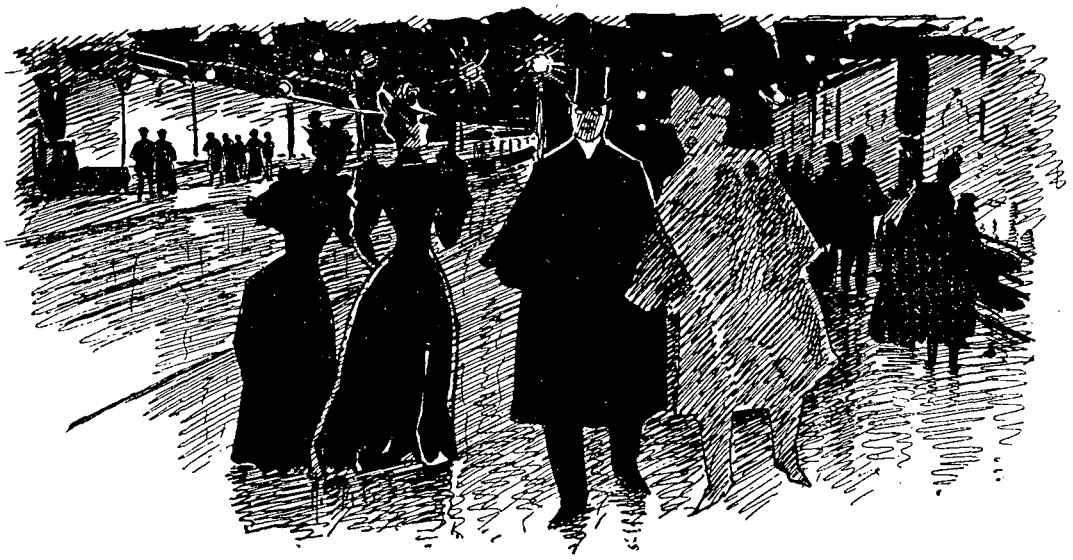
journal, he would enter the court-room somewhat late, pause while attendants cleared a way for him and then majestically approach the reporters' table. Throwing off his fur-lined overcoat he would affix his monocle, survey the multitude and then seat himself with his back to the judge, apparently lapsing into a state of coma. But the next day his stories of the trial surpassed all others in vividness and exactitude.

His gift of English, his knowledge of foreign languages and literature, earned him a mighty reputation as an omniscient intellectual among the Fourth Estate. One Park Row scribbler related with humble pride how he read one of Thompson's intellectual articles and "could not for the life of him tell what it was all about". So he locked himself up in privacy and silence with a bottle of whisky and a package of cigarettes and after a half hour of potations and perusals he "began to get glimpses of intelligence as to what the article meant".

This is what a rather staccato style of journalese, together with the condiments of foreign phrases and recondite bits of learning, could do for one in New York in the nineties. Hear some of his comments as dramatic critic on the appearance of Duse in *La Gioconda*: ". . . Indeed Duse's magic can work greater miracles than this. She is a weaver of spells. You come out of the theatre dazed as one who has looked on a chimera. Your nerves are bruised and all night, and for many nights, you shall see the white, tragic face and the bloody hands and shall hear the shuddering cry of agony. It is art, yes; but it is a hectic and fevered art, which is not for those who could lie tranquil o' nights. In a word, it is Duse's art —terrible, authentic, and hallucinate". And then the classic ending: "This hollow-eyed woman is the hasheesh of the stage".

But enthusiasms for Italian acting, French symbolism, and Norwegian drama were not to be confined very long to occasional chroniques in the dailies. Possibly it was the appearance of *The Yellow Book*, or even that English organ's American predecessor, *The Chapbook*, which charged the literary atmos-



IN BROADWAY

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phere. But it was certain that the urge to found little magazines was in the air in those days. So Thompson, together with Huneker, at that time musical critic of the *Recorder*, and two cartoonists, Tom Fleming and Tom Powers, decided to found a daring and emancipated periodical which would express their admirations and detestations in word and picture. It was, as well, to distil all their youthful spirits of horse-play and buffoonery, and Vance Thompson was cast as chief jester.

M'lle New York it was called, and the title represented not only an effort to ape some of the flippant weeklies on the banks of the Seine, but also to confer on the bawdy metropolis of New York some of Paris's charm and *diablerie*. The first number closed with this invocation: "Bon jour *M'lle New York!* Sh, saperlipopette—b'jour, l'petit rat'. *M'lle New York* is awake. You have indulged in the innocent depravity of her morning kiss. Now ring the bell and bid your man bring you a toothbrush and a glass of water."

But the Foreword to the first number is more explicit as to the note which the magazine sought to maintain. It was an arraignment of the vulgar public. "The public—this grotesque aggregation of foolish individuals pretends to literary taste; it has its painters, its playwrights, its authors; the part of it which reads the male bluestocking, William Dean Howells, looks down upon that part which reads the female bluestocking, Richard Harding Davis; that part which reads Richard Harding Davis looks down upon that part which reads Laura Jean Libbey (why in heaven's name?) and the readers of Miss Libbey look down in turn upon the readers of *The Police Gazette*.

"*M'lle New York* is not concerned with the public. Her only ambition is to disintegrate some small portion of the public into its original component parts—the aristocracies of birth, wit, learning, and art, and the joyously vulgar mob."

This was Thompson's opening blast and, in fact, the first number was largely written by him. He engaged in some rather jejune speculations on the nature of democracy and aristocracy, took his fling at "ballotocracy", and gazed piously and hopefully at the horizon for the appearance of a new intellectual aristocracy. Of more importance was his portrait study of Knut Hamsun, whom he had met in Paris; it was the first article on Hamsun written in America.

But Fleming and Powers also assisted the editor in making up this number. The Foreword was enlivened, marginally, with a picture of a nude young woman emerging from the top of a champagne bottle, and the bottom of the page carried a *roué* winking roguishly at a *cocotte*, while a weird cat strayed from one page to the other. The article on Hamsun, too, was escorted by a light looking young woman, this time only a bust; but the end of the article was celebrated by a strange graphic whim—a man with a pig's head taking a shapely girl in swimming. These were by Fleming, who excelled in such pranks. But Powers did the cover—a dream of pink and black, clouds of tobacco smoke through which a café scene glimmers, women in wide sailor hats, men in top hats, and *garçons* standing at attention.

No magazine in the nineties was complete without some reference to the tenement problem. Not only sociologists but also novelists were wrinkling their brows over East Side housing. So a short sketch by Edward W. Townsend, author of *Chimmie Fadden*, represented some compromise with the prevailing taste. More interesting is a burlesque by Charles Eugene Hamlin. He pictures the

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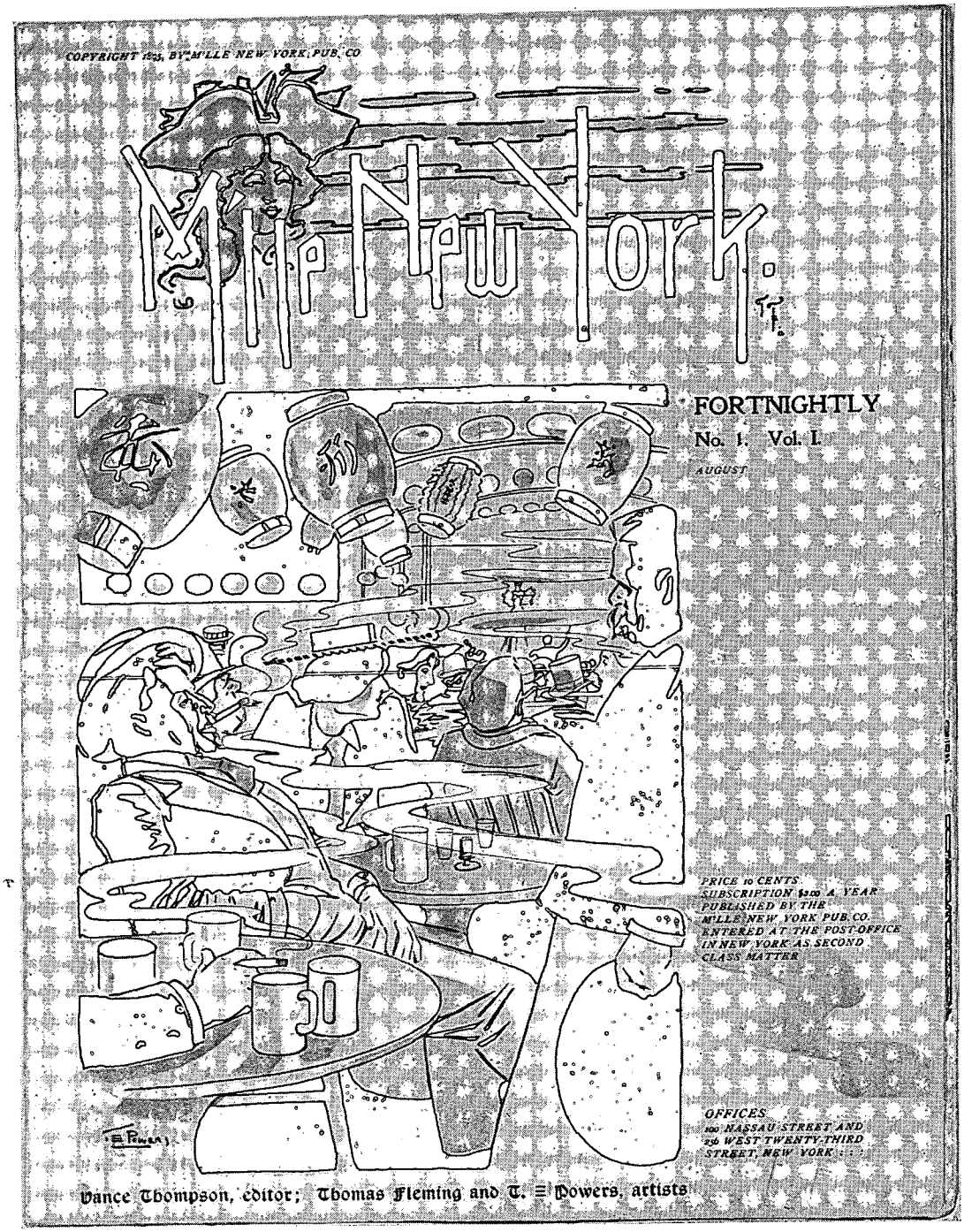

The cover of the first issue of Vance Thompson's sprightly magazine of the nineties, "M'lle New York". This illustration and the others in Mr. Hanighen's article are reproduced from the author's file of "M'lle New York".

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Metropolitan Opera House in 1995 listening enraptured to a Negro opus, sung and performed by coloured people and written by one Anton Dvořák whom he salutes as "the musical emancipator of the Negro who taught him how to win respect and equal rights to art". This interest in Negro art flowered a few numbers later in a *feuilleton* by Thompson entitled *Two Nigger Poets*, describing the work of Charles Cros and José de Hérédia, two Left Bank mulattoes. It ended in the interrogation, "but where's the nigger poet of New York?"

After the first number Thompson wrote less and a few other scribblers were permitted to disport themselves. James Huneker replaced Hamlin as musical interpreter and wrote some purple-patched sketches in the style of his *Visionaries* and *Melomaniac*. One evokes a strange woman pianist who plays Chopin's second *Impromptu* to her lover. His criticism had apparently not yet attained its celebrated acuity for we find him defending Tschaikowsky in a controversy with Thompson, who incidentally attacks Rubenstein on the grounds that he "echoed that echo Raff", as well. It is only when the author of *Painted Veils* devoted himself to studies of perfumes *à la* Huysmans that we recognize the style that later became famous.

One of the strange characteristics of the magazine was its anti-Semitism. Perhaps it is explicable by Thompson's rather snobbish predilections and Huneker's adulation of Edouard Drumont, the famous anti-Dreyfusard. Fleming and Powers were most ferocious at times and seem to have made a device of a small Levite with prominent nose, labelled with a dollar sign or bearing a bag so labelled. One sketch depicts a Jewish gentleman embracing a hog whose tail is a dollar sign. The diatribes of Thompson and Huneker were no less severe. "Rubenstein was a man of talent but like every Jew without genius or originality." There is a musical chronique entitled *White Music and Jewish*. And what is more harsh than this: "Jewish children are more intelligent than ours at the age of puberty; however they are less intelligent, they lose as they grow. They are at once nearer Nature and the Ape". Huneker contributed a sniggering sketch of Jews eating pork in Greitner's café.

Strangely enough, in the decade of the A.P.A., this anti-Semitism was not matched by a concurrent anti-popery. Thompson had been impressed by the pagan Catholicism of Verlaine and the drift back to the Church which began in the early nineties in France. And Huneker with his *ni pratiquant ni croyant* Catholicism was also of this general trend. However, he must have given some shocks to such Catholics as read the magazine with his interest in Satanism. He seems to have worked under the motto of "Baudelaire thou should'st be living at this hour" and characters in his sketches are always making the sign of the Cross, taking opium or alluding mysteriously to Black Masses. In fact, one of the first appearances of the Huysmans influence in

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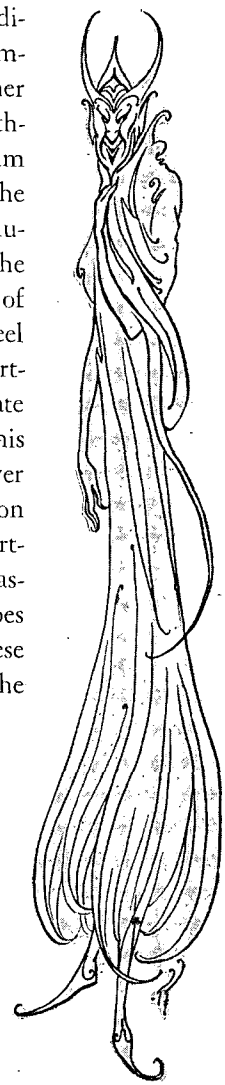
America is in one of Huneker's sketches, *When the Black Mass Was Heard*. Another on perfumes appeared in the magazine and was translated into French by Remy de Gourmont to the delight of Huysmans himself.

But Vance Thompson's religion, to believe his highly scented editorials, was "Autolotry". A compound of Nietzsche, Max Stirner and several other Continental soothsayers, with overtones of William James—this was the philosophy he expounded in several leaders. "Autolotry—it is the artist's religion. The true artist must learn the lesson of himility and like a little child kneel down and worship himself. The artist is great in degree commensurate with his egotism. It may be that his work remains futile, that he never finds artistic expression. Production is not everything. To the Barren Artist as to the barren woman the pleasure is none the less because it does not end in creation. And in these days so shockingly democratic the only pleasure left is intellectual vanity." Was this a personal affirmation, or just a joke or gag, like the title autolotry?



It is difficult to disentangle sincere credos from the many flippant *élans*, for these "-isms" and "-atrys" abound in the magazine. For instance, "gynolatry" which Thompson denounced thirty years before the present mode of "anti-feminism". "God alone has the right to be a misanthrope; for man there is only misogyny. Perhaps in these days when the hens hold conventions and their fritiniancy disturbs the ears of thoughtful men, it may not be superfluous to iterate the old truth that woman is physically, mentally, and morally inferior to man. Women have succeeded as courtezans; in this ancient but dishonourable profession for women they have attained their only success. In letters, art, science—nothing!" And in conclusion, "The hen has a right to cackle only on one occasion—when she lays an egg; she never has a right to crow and by reason of imperfect thoracic development she never can crow".

To which James Huneker ripostes: "Man is not woman's superior; he is only her equal. Man is the rude, unchiselled; woman the finished, the accomplished. Man projects, woman fructifies. Woman remains sovereign of all she surveys. Man goes mad about her, obeying unconsciously the behests of that passion which makes for eternity—a child is your only immortality". The joke of all this controversy was that while Thompson stood in immense awe of his little wife and never dared oppose her slightest wish, Huneker was said to be a brutal cave-man.

This almost collegiate horse-play is well seen in notes by The Curious Impertinent about a dinner given by the editorial staff and contributors. The chronicler simply rescues remarks made at the dinner. "What we like in writers is their resemblance to ourselves. God help those who resemble Richard Harding Davis. Even Richard Harding Davis would gain by not being a fool. Only the great man is happy—an argument which ends with this: probably Richard Harding Davis is happier than the wisest man living.

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All lovely women have large mouths and long hands. The narrow-hipped woman is the chief danger to American civilization. To sleep at night is an act essentially bourgeois and philistine. I sleep by day because it is useless to show myself to the proletariat."

Richard Harding Davis was not the only target for their darts. "Foolish Correspondent asks me why I object to Mr. Richard Watson Gilder printing his verses in the *Century*; when I print my own in *M'lle New York*. He is indeed foolish. Mr. Gilder prints his poems because they are his own; I print mine because they are good." And the Dean of American Letters, W. D. Howells, is assailed on the grounds of his moral snobbishness. He is bracketed with Gilder as being one of the chief deterrents to the formation of an American literature.

But in spite of these many iconoclasms, there was little effort on the rebels' part to make American literature in these pages. There were a few sketches of New York rendezvous and cafés, one rather good picture of a French *café chantant* on the lower West side, a few poems *à la* Verlaine, but they were all obviously of a second *couvée*—the richer wine of these men's enthusiasms ran to the interpretation of foreign literature. Thus Huneker's attempt to discuss a vaudeville singer, Maggie Cline, under the title of *A Brunhilda of the Bowery*, was sandwiched between a survey of Portuguese literature and the announcement of the "discovery" of Stanislaw Przybyszewski, the author of *Homo Sapiens*. And Fleming's talents too often went to reproducing a bust of Verlaine in the margins, or a goat butting into a verse of Jules Laforgue.

Instead of realistic portrayals of their environment, the *avant-garde* preferred to buffoon as it did with "Lingwood Evans". This writer, who seemed a strange compound of anarchist, aristocrat, scholar, and journalist, was played up for several numbers before being unmasked as a hoax, his copy being written by Thompson. But the stuff was clever and deserves a place in this sort of literature beside the Emanuel Morgan-Bynner and Knish-Ficke affair.

Rupert Hughes produced some diverting vernacular stories—probably the most indigenous and at the same time effective writing which appeared in the magazine. The heroine was Slab-sided Sal, a street walker of such decayed charm that she could only market her wares on the darker streets at a distance from a lamp post. The first of these stories ended with an attack upon her by a hobo who found her drifting out in Harlem among the billboards which then were the only tenants of the great open spaces. When Sal managed to ask him why he was seizing and carrying her away, and he told her in brief language, a yawp of laughter at the incongruity led him to think he had carried off a maniac and he dropped her on an unnecessarily hard stone and ran. In another story Sal meets an ex-convict and decoys him to her room; each thinks the other has money, and each gives the other knockout drops; both pass out. They were gorgeous comedies and ribald enough to suit

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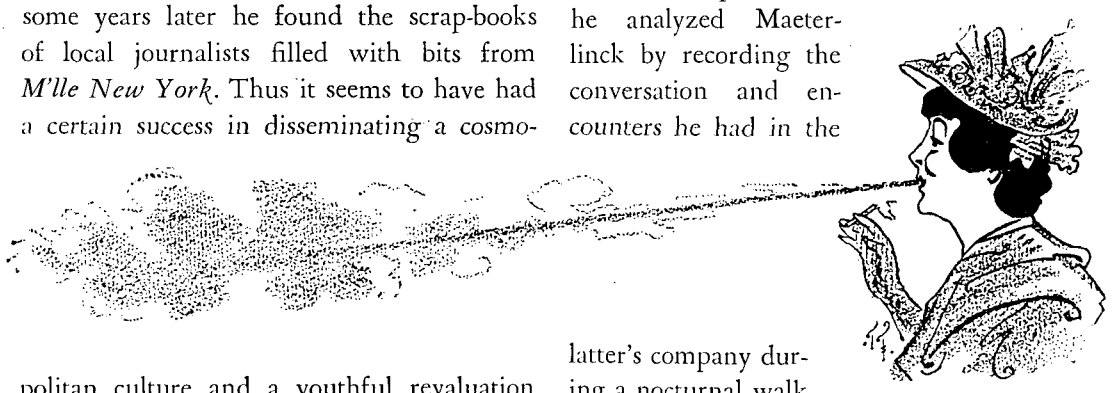
the most sophisticated; nevertheless there was a certain pathos in the treatment of them.

Needless to say *M'lle New York* had a rather restricted clientèle. Perhaps its narrow appeal kept it from notice of the authorities, or its ribaldries, so audacious in those Puritanical days, would have earned suppression. Never a good financial venture, before long it began to alter. The covers indicate sudden changes of office and management. Issued first as a fortnightly, it eventually appeared whenever the staff was able to pay the printer. Outside capital was solicited; Marc Blumenberg of *The Musical Courier* was one of the angels. The numbers became fewer and more irregular and finally, with a last defiant gasp, the venture expired.

Certainly its net contribution to American literature is small. But its influence seems to have been considerable. George Henry Payne says that on a tour through the States some years later he found the scrap-books of local journalists filled with bits from *M'lle New York*. Thus it seems to have had a certain success in disseminating a cosmopolitan culture and a youthful revaluation of the times. It undoubtedly stimulated the vogue of little magazines. The *Criterion* stemmed from it and many of the writers of *M'lle New York* wrote for this periodical of Henri Dumay and Percival Pollard. Further, *M'lle New York* encouraged some young writers such as Rupert Hughes and Philip Hale. It gave Huneker a chance to strike his Brobdingnagian critical stride. And Vance Thompson emerged as a journalistic *arbiter elegantiarium*.

He went to live in Paris, in the midst of the literary expatriates of that day—Booth Tarkington, Harry Leon Wilson, Rose O'Neill—where he worked on his most important volume, *French Portraits*, and supplied the Hearst chain with the best sensations of the post-Dreyfus era. For a time he was Paris correspondent of THE BOOKMAN.

French Portraits is the only one of his books which he regarded seriously, and it probably represents his most sustained efforts in literature. It followed the practice of Ernest La Jeunesse, the reigning boulevard critic of the day, in picturing the sitter, whether man of letters or artist, in some characteristic pose. Thus Huysmans was represented by La Jeunesse as sitting and talking to his soul. Thompson modified this procedure but followed it in spirit when he analyzed Maeterlinck by recording the conversation and encounters he had in the latter's company during a nocturnal walk through the old section of Brussels. But even the most academic of his analyses was couched in some rather unconventional journalese and he had a fatal weakness for preciously coined words and phrases, "sib to his soul", "the vagrom man", and such Gallicisms as "gracile", "fictive", "inutile". Compare Thompson with Arthur Symons, who wrote about much the same subjects, and one



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notes the former's superficiality and his readiness to accept the most conventional view.

Percival Pollard, in *Their Day in Court*, accords Thompson a caustic but not entirely unjust survey. He refers to the "acrobatic posturings of Vance Thompson. In his *French Portraits* he is like a ringmaster in the circus whose immaculate ego and habit so outshone his surroundings that we saw nothing of the equestrians he pretends to superintend". And Pollard points out that this injection of pretty words and a personal element spoils a medium of parody which would have been successful from the hands of Barry Pain or La Jeunesse.

So it was his "autolotry" strained through journalism that prevented him from being the cultural counterpart of Arthur Symons in the United States. He was not able to settle down to as sound a piece of current literary introducing as Pollard's *Masks and Minstrels of Modern Germany*, and he had not the versatility nor industry of Huneker. Perhaps he was not merely posturing when he wrote that "the only pleasure left is intellectual vanity".

He was more successful in his articles on international politics. There he could do well with thumb-nail sketches of the great, and gossip amusingly seasoned with dilettante cullings from current literature—all couched in a rapid, vivid, effective style. *Diplomatic Mysteries* is the *You Can't Print That* of the year 1903, containing inside information on the sudden death of President Félix Faure, dark hints about Bismarck's nefarious intrigues, a version of the Mayerling mystery and a striking portrait of Tolstoy on his farm. Perhaps the best contribution of the volume to current political history is his judgment on the money-power influence in international diplomacy.

He was most prolific in these early 1900's. After leaving Hearst in 1907 he free-lanced. Publishers and editors sought his pen and every year he would embark for Europe with numerous commissions. In *Human Life* (the name itself is an ironical obituary of the periodical) for 1908 the editors triumphantly announced that Thompson had been secured to write on European topics, and they printed a letter from him which illuminates his existence at this time. "I have drawn up a list [of proposed articles]. Here are a few suggestions: Bernhardt; then Jaurès, the great socialist leader, a curious type; Fallières the President; and then perhaps certain notable people I have met and known more or less—the Czar; Wilhelm of Germany; the Pope—this is very interesting, the life of the peasant Pope who rose to the Papal chair and I have visited his peasant family in Venetia; the old

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King of the Belgians who is a kind of royal Rockefeller, with variations." He did these and he did more, an account of a tour with a French circus, the sisters of the Pope,—he fairly pillaged Europe for subjects.

With his growing success as a drawing-card on the covers of magazines he began to write books on specification from publishers. Thus he turned out *Eat and Grow Thin*, an elaboration of some menus which his wife had concocted, and a tremendous success; *Take It From Me*, a book of popularized philosophy, hastily fabricated to finance a trip to Europe. Then he proceeded deeper into hack commerce and produced for the uplifting public of the Wilson era *Drink and Be Sober*. Not only the booze-hound but the sterling moderate drinker were crucified in this typical W.C.T.U. opus. Even harder to imagine is a subsequent book, *Woman*, in which the hater of "gynolatry" recants and ridicules his "yellow-spatted" youth. As a crowning piece of abjectness there is a pamphlet *Dolled-up Booze* for "The Boys Who Will Fight", written especially for the Y.M.C.A. during the war.

His friends insist that these were all pieces of hack journalism, that he had no convictions whatsoever except the lawyer's sincerity in making a good brief for the immediate client. They point out that he even sneaked some of his buffoonery into the pious tracts which he had to write. His young boozer who physically exploded after a drinking debauch had a touch of his old Gilbertian humour in it and would have amused anyone but the fanatics for whose gratification it was intended.

He sought other lucrative fields: it was natural, nay inevitable, that he should manufacture mystery stories in his declining years. Only an occasional wistful recollection of his youth—such as the fine memory of Strindberg in THE BOOKMAN for 1920—recalled the fact that he had been once more than a hack writer. His death in Nice in 1924 was followed by no literary homages, no intellectual masses. The press associations merely told the world that the author of *Eat and Grow Thin* had died. Perhaps he foresaw and relished this grim joke and perhaps we may charitably classify his uplift books as the lugubrious farces of an aging man—quite surprisingly the same man who was responsible for the most amusing jest of the nineties—*M'lle New York*.

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EUGENE O'NEILL AND THE HIGHBROW MELODRAMA

by H. G. Kemelman

MELODRAMA, as the name implies, is a combination of music and drama. This combination, once a popular form of dramatic art, has now almost entirely disappeared as a form of expression. In recent years the drama-music combination has been confined largely to the silent cinema. Here, as in stage melodramas of an earlier period, the music that accompanied the action was an integral part of the dramatic presentation. The music helped to build up the emotional background that made the action plausible. When the play was examined apart from the music, it was found to be unbalanced and unreal, the characters lifeless, their speech extravagant and grandiose. The characters were invariably type or "stock" characters whose physical features foreshadowed their actions in the play. Thus, the villain was tall and sleek and invariably had a small, dark moustache. It was not necessary that he do anything villainous; his moustache was sufficient proof of his villainy and the audience interpreted his actions accordingly. Because the accompanying music carried part of the emotional burden, the writer of melodramas was able to evoke a greater emotional response from his audience than was possible in tragedy. Violence, unrestrained action and speech, and a romantic, daydream picture of life characterized the melodrama.

So pronounced were the violence and exaggeration of the melodrama in its original form that they came to be regarded as its fundamental characteristics, and the term melodrama was applied to all serious plays with exaggerated action whether they were accompanied by music or not. The introduction of the vitaphone resulted in the passing of the silent cinema, which was the last stronghold of the drama-music type of melodrama. By the term melodrama as used in this essay will be understood the present meaning of exaggerated and unbalanced serious drama.

The popularity of the melodrama is due in great part to its romanticism. It presents in concrete form that vague, improbable, yet delightful daydream world which exists only in the unrestrained fancy of the individual. The shopgirl sees her daydream self depicted in the beautiful movie actress who overcomes all obstacles and succeeds in winning the handsome hero. The department store clerk who in idle moments imagines himself a hard-riding cowboy, foiling the cattle thieves and marrying the beautiful New York heiress who happens to be visiting the ranch, finds in the melodrama a more complete expression of his idle fancies; and for the hour or so that the performance lasts it is himself who is living the part and not the actor on the stage. He never questions the probability of the action: the more exaggerated it is, the more villains he overcomes

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singlehanded, the better he likes it. Of course, sometimes the hero is a gold-miner or a wealthy clubman or a lieutenant of Cossacks, but basically he is always the same, since the daydream self of the individual in the audience is always the same. Like a tailor's dummy, he is tricked out in different costumes, but it is always the same wax figure underneath. Naturally, the mentality of the audience will determine the character of the melodrama. The melodrama of the cinema is concerned with the romanticism of action, since physical prowess is for the movie fan the criterion of greatness. But there is another type of melodrama; a type which appeals to a more intellectual but no less romantic audience. This type, which we might call "highbrow melodrama", embodies intellectual and emotional romanticism. Highbrow melodrama is just as exaggerated and unreal as the melodrama of the movies, but the unreality is along different lines. And in this category of highbrow melodramas belong the plays of Eugene O'Neill.

II

In O'Neill we find no blond, curly-headed heroes foiling train robbers and no sleek, dark villains kidnapping heroines, but we do find two male types just as distinct and just as unreal as these. The male protagonist, or rather that male character who has the sympathy of the author, is the same in every play. He is always a sensitive soul with large, dark eyes and a face harrowed by lines of internal struggle. The other male type, the antagonist, although not always clearly defined since O'Neill's heroes do not always fight against individuals, is usually a thick-set, practical man with small, blue eyes. In the movie melodrama, virtue in the male was a matter of hirsutage on the upper lip; in the O'Neill highbrow melodramas, virtue depends on eye pigmentation. Let us examine the evidence.

In *The Great God Brown* the opposition between the two types is clearly stated. William Brown is first introduced to us as "a handsome, tall, and athletic boy of nearly eighteen. He is blond and blue-eyed, with a likeable smile and a frank good-humoured face, its expression already indicating a disciplined restraint. His manner has the easy self-assurance of a normal intelligence". The reader new to O'Neill is apt to jump to the conclusion that Brown is the hero of the piece, but the knowing will readily recognize the above description as typical of the O'Neill villain. "Frank good-humoured face", "disciplined restraint", "normal intelligence", and above all "blond and blue-eyed" —these are anathema to O'Neill. Consider now the hero of the play, Dion Anthony. "He is about the same height as young Brown but lean and wiry, without repose, continually in restless nervous movement. His face is masked. The mask is a fixed forcing of his own face—dark, spiritual, poetic, passionately supersensitive, helplessly unprotected in its childlike, religious faith in life—into the expression of a mocking, reckless, defiant, gayly scoffing and sensual young Pan." Here we have the opposition between two types that is to be found in most of O'Neill's plays: the lean, dark, sensitive, poetic hero and the thick-set, fair, normal villain.

We find it in *Beyond the Horizon*. Robert Mayo is described as a "tall, slender young man of twenty-three. There is a touch of the poet about him expressed in his high forehead and wide, dark eyes. His features are delicate and refined, leaning to weakness in the mouth and chin". His brother Andrew is described as "twenty-seven years old, and opposite type to Robert—husky, sun-bronzed,

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handsome in a large-featured, manly fashion —a son of the soil, intelligent in a shrewd way, but with nothing of the intellectual about him". The predominant note in the description of Andrew is disparagement: "handsome in a manly fashion" (a fashion which evidently does not commend itself to O'Neill), "intelligent in a shrewd way". The antagonism of the author to Andrew is more obvious in another description of him in Act III. Here O'Neill says of him, "his eyes are keener and more alert. There is even a suggestion of ruthless cunning about them". It requires little imagination to see that Dion Anthony and Robert are one and the same person; just as Andrew and William Brown are the same.

Consider the descriptions of the three important male characters in *The Straw*. Bill Carmody: "He is a man of fifty, heavy-set and round-shouldered, with long muscular arms and swollen-veined, hairy hands. His face is bony and ponderous; his nose, short and squat; his mouth large, thick-lipped and harsh; his complexion mottled—red, purple-streaked, and freckled; his hair, short and stubby with a bald spot on the crown. The expression of his small, blue eyes is one of selfish cunning". Fred Nicholls: "He is a young fellow of twenty-three, stockily built, fair-haired, handsome in a commonplace, conventional mold. His manner is obviously an attempt at suave gentility; he has an easy taking smile and a ready laugh, but there is a petty calculating expression in his small, observing, blue eyes". And now Exhibit C, Stephan Murray: "Murray is thirty years old —a tall, slender, rather unusual looking fellow with a pale face, sunken under high cheek bones, lined about the eyes and mouth, jaded and worn for one still so young. His intelligent, large hazel eyes have a tired, dispirited expression in repose, but can quicken instantly with a concealment mechanism of mocking, careless humour whenever his inner privacy is threatened. . . . His manner as revealed by his speech—nervous, inquisitive, alert—seems more an acquired quality than any part of his real nature". Obviously in Stephan Murray we have still another Pan-like Dion Anthony. It is hardly necessary to add that Carmody and Fred Nicholls are the antagonists—condemned to villainy by their stocky build and their blue eyes.

In *Diff'rent* there is no single male antagonist, but the hero runs true to form. He is Caleb Williams and O'Neill describes him as "tall and powerfully built, about thirty. Black hair, keen, dark eyes, face rugged and bronzed, mouth obstinate and good-natured". Lest the reader suppose that Caleb lacks some of the qualities attributed to the other heroes, we offer further description of him from Act II. "His face wears its set expression of an emotionless mask but his eyes cannot conceal an inward struggle, a baffled and painful attempt to comprehend, a wounded look of bewildered hurt." Here again is the mask which covers the inward struggle.

Another baffled hero is Jim Harris in *All God's Chillun Got Wings*—"a quiet-mannered Negro boy with a queerly baffled sensitive face". Inasmuch as Jim is a Negro, we may safely assume that he has the *sine qua non* of the O'Neill hero, large dark eyes. The hero of *Desire Under the Elms* is still another dark-eyed, baffled, sensitive soul. So is Michael Cape, the hero of *Welded*. So is Orin Mannon in *Mourning Becomes Electra*. So is . . . but need we go on? Suffice it to say that every male character who is described as dark-eyed and sensitive is a protagonist and every male character who has blue eyes is an antagonist. And it is obvious,

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I think, that all the O'Neill heroes are essentially one and the same person. They are as stereotyped and uniform as Ford cars; slight variations in body styles there may be, but the motors are of the same design. Nor need we speculate long as to who this person is who keeps popping up as the leading figure in most of the plays. It is Eugene O'Neill.

Inasmuch as the descriptions of the heroes fit him, and inasmuch as several of the plays are autobiographical, it is reasonable to suppose that all the heroes are projections of O'Neill's personality. Even Jim Harris in *All God's Chillun Got Wings* is O'Neill in black-face. Indeed, he might easily have followed the precedent set by the writers of paper-covered boys' books in the naming of his plays, thus: *Eugene O'Neill the Boy Architect, Eugene O'Neill on a New England Farm, Eugene O'Neill in Harlem,* et cetera.

It is important to note that these heroes of O'Neill's, although they are often described as poetic, are never poets. Their poetic natures do not help them to produce anything; they do not even bring them happiness, for in O'Neill plays the happiness of the hero is in inverse proportion to his sensibility. They are described as intelligent, but they manifest their intelligence only in their vague maunderings concerning their vaguer emotions. To exalt these pitiable figures, as O'Neill does, to establish them as Nature's noblemen merely because they have failed to find happiness is the height of romantic absurdity. And this high level of romantic absurdity O'Neill does not fail to maintain in the treatment of his female characters.

Although physically the female characters present no such uniformity as was found in the male characters, nevertheless they are emotionally all of a piece. Almost all are sexually abnormal; rare is the character who is not either a prostitute or a wanton or a nymphomaniac. Let us call the roll. The female character in *Thirst*, the heroine in *The Web*, the female character in *The Long Voyage Home*, all the women in *Moon of the Caribbees*, both the female characters in *Anna Christie*, the woman in *Welded*, Cybel in *The Great God Brown*, Pompeia in *Lazarus Laughed*—all are prostitutes.

Aside from those mentioned there are also a number of wantons, sexual delinquents who have managed to maintain their amateur standing. In this class would be included Ada and Mrs. Fife in *Dynamo*, the only character to appear on the stage in *Before Breakfast*, the heroine in *All God's Chillun Got Wings*, Abbie Putnam, the heroine in *Desire Under the Elms*, Eleanor Cape, the heroine of *Welded*, and Christine Mannon in *Mourning Becomes Electra*. As for Emma Crosby, the heroine in *Diff'rent* and Nina, the leading figure in *Strange Interlude*, they are best classified as nymphomaniacs.

There are a few normal female characters, but their very normality seems to gain for them the playwright's contempt. Almost invariably they are portrayed as narrow, petty, bigoted and lacking in understanding. They are in striking contrast to the sexually abnormal female characters, who are presented as noble, spiritual, sympathetic, and wise. This contrast is clearly defined in *The Great God Brown*. Here, the reader is first introduced to Margaret, the wife of Dion Anthony the hero. She is a normal girl of whom O'Neill says, "[she is] the eternal girl-woman with a virtuous simplicity of instinct, properly oblivious to everything but the means to her end of maintaining the race". She loves her husband because he is clever and poetic and romantic, but she does not understand him and she never finds out his real nature, the nature that he hides behind a

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mask. Once he takes off the mask and tries to show her what he is really like, but she becomes frightened and does not recognize him. On the other hand, there is Cybel the prostitute. It is to her that Dion comes for sympathy and understanding. Their relations are purely platonic (the relations of the O'Neill hero to the O'Neill prostitute are always platonic); she is his counselor, his teacher. Only to her does he show his true, inner nature.

Contrast the loose Mrs. Fife with the upright Mrs. Light in *Dynamo*. Mrs. Fife is sympathetic, kind, and loving even to those who hate her. Mrs. Light, secure in the knowledge of her own virtue, is bitter, hard, and deceitful. By her hardness and treachery she drives her son from the house and it is in the Fife household that he finds solace and comfort. In *Lazarus Laughed* it is the courtesan Pompeia, of all the people in the play, who understands the teaching of Lazarus and is willing to undergo death with him. The nobility of the prostitute in *Welded* is such that the hero kneels before her and refuses to rise until she forgives him for having ventured to approach her. Then he kisses her on the forehead and calls her "Sister". The reader must not laugh—the playwright's intent was not satirical.

In *Anna Christie* the heroine, a former prostitute, shows the greatness of her character in refusing because of her past life to marry the man she loves. It is made plain that she is really "pure" in soul and that circumstance rather than desire led her to prostitution. Nevertheless she tells her lover what she has been, and he, as she expected he would, curses her and leaves her. This unselfish love, this quixotic disregard for their own happiness is common to almost all of the sexually abnormal female characters. Anna, Marthy, Cybel, Mrs. Fife, Pompeia . . . they are all so wise, so understanding, so generous, so noble—and so improbable. To sum up, when a woman walks on stage in an O'Neill highbrow melodrama, the chances are ten to one that she is in some way sexually abnormal and if she is, she is certain to be the finest character on the stage.

III

It is only to be expected that unreal and exaggerated characters will talk in an unreal and exaggerated fashion. The diction in O'Neill is just as grandiose and extravagant and unreal as the characters who use it. It is a rare O'Neill hero who does not stop the action of the play now and again to deliver a long metaphysical address on the meaning of his existence and it is a rare O'Neill prostitute who does not get off some good things on Life and Man and Love—in capitals.

The Great God Brown offers many good examples of this grandiose, pseudo-poetic diction; speeches where a needle of thought is hidden in a haystack of verbiage. This one is typical:—

> DION: Brown will still need me—to reassure him he's alive! I've loved, lusted, won and lost, sang and wept! I've been life's lover! I've fulfilled her will and if she's through with me now it's only because I was too weak to dominate her in turn. It isn't enough to be her creature, you've got to create her or she requests you to destroy yourself.

This next passage is a soliloquy. The speaker is at the time a high-school senior:—

> DION (*with a suffering bewilderment*): Why am I afraid to dance, I who love music and rhythm and grace and song and laughter? Why am I afraid to live, I who love life and the beauty of flesh and the living colours of earth and sky and sea? Why am I afraid of love, I who love love? Why am I afraid, I who am not afraid? Why

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must I pretend to scorn in order to pity? Why must I hide myself in self-contempt in order to understand? Why must I be so ashamed of my strength, so proud of my weakness? Why must I live in a cage like a criminal, defying and hating, I who love peace and friendship? (*Clasping his hands above in supplication*) Why was I born without a skin, O God, that I must wear armour in order to touch or to be touched?

Here is a sample of the philosophy that Cybel the prostitute hands out:—

CYBEL: You may be important but your life's not. There's millions of it born every second. Life can cost too much even for a sucker to afford it—like everything else. And it's not sacred—only the you inside is. The rest is earth.

The prostitute in *Welded* has a little different brand of philosophy. In the following passage she is preaching it to Cape, the hero:—

WOMAN: I was thinking of the whole game. It's funny, ain't it?

CAPE (*slowly*): You mean—Life?

WOMAN: Sure. You got to laugh, ain't you? You got to loin to like it!

CAPE (*this makes an intense impression on him. He nods his head several times*): Yes! That's it! That's exactly it! That goes deeper than wisdom—to learn to love life—to accept it and be exalted—that's the one faith left us! (*Then with a tremulous smile*) Good-by. I've joined your church. I'm going home.

Here the sensitive O'Neill hero engaged in the Higher Love gives vent to his passion:—

CAPE: Listen! Often I wake up in the night—in a black world, alone in a hundred million years of darkness. I feel like crying out to God for mercy because life lives! Then instinctively I seek you—my hand touches you! You are there—beside me—alive—with you. I become a whole, a truth! Life guides me back through the hundred million years to you. It reveals a beginning in unity that I may have faith in the unity of the end!

These passages are typical of the plays they are taken from, and the plays are typical of O'Neill's work as a whole. Is there very much difference between the pomposity of the last passage, for example, and the line, "I scorn your filthy lucre, Jack Dalton!" Is not the one as unreal as the other? They are both examples of rant, of melodramatic diction and both are suited to melodramatic characters and melodramatic plots.

IV

O'Neill's plot structure reveals a total lack of dramatic sense. The drama, because of its temporal and mechanical limitations, is a medium for the expression of swift, forceful, and animated action. In O'Neill the action consists almost entirely of a lumbering analysis of the obsessed and even insane minds of the characters in his plays. Insanity is to be found in most of his plays and in many cases the entire structure of the play is based on some mad obsession of one of the characters. In *Gold*, for example, the plot is woven around the obsession of Isaiah Bartlett that he has discovered a chest full of gold and jewels. His determination to hunt for the treasure is so great that even the sickness and subsequent death of his wife fail to move him from his purpose. Later on he learns that the treasure is worthless, and, overcome by remorse, he drops dead. Isaiah Bartlett is presented to us from the very first scene as mad. The play is an analysis of a diseased mind, a case study for a psychiatrist; but it evokes no sympathy from the reader since the leading character is too far removed from the realm of common experience. The deaths of Isaiah and his wife are purely mechanical attempts to get at the emotions of the audience. I say mechanical,

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because the deaths are not justified either logically or emotionally.

This mechanical method of evoking an emotional response from the audience by depicting insanity, death, and suicide is characteristic of O'Neill plays just as it is characteristic of the melodrama in general. Perhaps the most flagrant example is that offered by *Marco Millions*. The author's purpose is to satirize the modern Babbitt in the person of Marco Polo. Marco is shown at the court of the Grand Khan of China as a greedy, uncultured, soulless money-grubber. The Princess Kukachin, who is betrothed to the Emperor of Persia, falls in love with Marco and she begs the sage Khan, her father, that he be permitted to command the fleet that is to escort her to her future husband. Characteristically, Marco Polo asks for permission to trade in the ports along the way. Before the end of the voyage, Kukachin discovers the true nature of Marco and she is overcome with disgust at his pettiness. Here the play should end. The author's purpose has been accomplished: Marco has been shown in his true colours—the business man has been satirized. Is it not enough? But no —the audience must shed crocodile tears. The author adds another scene wherein it is shown that Kukachin, although now the wife of a man who is everything that she has been taught to love and respect, is pining away and will soon die. The death of the princess is in no way necessary to the completion of the plot. It is literary *lagniappe* which spoils the play but wrings another tear from the audience. It is the O'Neill touch, the artist's signature—for unjustified death and suicide and insanity are to O'Neill plays what the sterling mark is to silver.

In the trilogy, *Mourning Becomes Electra*, O'Neill's latest contribution to the drama, the stage is converted into a veritable shambles. The toll of the Grim Reaper is two deaths by murder and two suicides out of a total of five principal characters. This play like the rest is based on madness. The central theme is incestuous love. It is not the incest that is occasionally found in Greek tragedy, in the Oedipus tale, for example, where the incest is accidental and the tragedy derives from the discovery that incest has been committed; nor yet is it the subconscious desire for incest that the Freudians tell us is the *primum mobile* of our emotional life. In the O'Neill play the characters have conscious incestuous desires. Christine becomes the mistress of Adam Brant because he reminds her of her son Orin, from whom she has been separated by the war. Lavinia's incestuous desires are even more apparent. Christine says to her: "I know you, Vinnie! I've watched you ever since you were little, trying to do exactly what you're doing now! You've tried to become the wife of your father and the mother of Orin! You've always schemed to steal my place!" And as for Orin, he makes a definite proposal to his sister Lavinia that they live together as man and wife. The reader sympathizes with the characters in the Greek story for they are perfectly normal, but the characters in the O'Neill play are so far removed from normal experience that they can interest him only as unusual cases of abnormal psychology.

It is by the use of abnormal and insane characters, violent death and suicide that O'Neill evokes unjustified emotional response from his audience. The reader can better judge of the extent of O'Neill's use of mechanical and melodramatic violence from Barret Clark's summary in his appreciative criticism of O'Neill. He says: "Of the thirty-five O'Neill plays I have seen or read, there are only five in which there is no murder, death, suicide, or insanity. In the others I

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find a total of six suicides and one unsuccessful attempt; ten important murders (not counting incidental episodes referred to in the text); nineteen deaths, nearly all due to violence; and six cases of insanity". Mr. Clark's statement is conservative: he does not include in the cases of insanity those borderline cases of abnormal obsession around which so many of the plots revolve.

Even in the less violent incidents of the plot O'Neill exaggerates his effects with all the melodramatic vigour at his command. In the handling of dramatic situations and of the reversals of fortune which befall the characters, he shows all the delicacy and subtlety of a circus advertisement. He uses dramatic irony, that delicate rapier, as a shillelah with which to cudgel his characters. He toys with them as a boy plays with a fly whose wings he has torn off. Indeed, an O'Neill character has only to express a desire for something in order to get just the opposite before the end of the act. *The Long Voyage Home* offers a typical example. The scene is the bar of a cheap saloon near the London waterfront. Joe, the proprietor, does a little crimping on the side. Just now he is trying to find an able-bodied seaman to ship on the *Amindra* for a voyage around Cape Horn. His task is difficult because the ship has a bad reputation: the pay is low, the food is poor, and the captain is a slave-driver. Furthermore, the voyage around the Horn is a long one. Soon four sailors enter the bar. They have just been paid off and all except one, Olsen the Swede, are drunk. For years Olsen has been planning to go back to Sweden, there to settle down on a farm; but every time he had been paid off, he had squandered his money in drunken celebration. For this reason, he refuses to drink. Another thing, Olsen's mother is very old now and he is anxious to see her before she dies. Now comes the *dénouement*. In spite of the fact that Olsen is the only member of the party who is sober and the only one who refuses to drink, in spite of the fact that Olsen is the only one who does not want to go to sea and the only one who has a good reason for not shipping again—it is Olsen who is drugged, robbed, and then put aboard the *Amindra*. There is one more effect needed to make the case perfect and O'Neill does not fail to add it: Olsen is the only one who had shipped on the *Amindra* before and knew of its reputation. The reversal is now complete in every detail, but it does not thrill. It is so artificially perfect that it loses all suspense; poor Olsen never had a chance.

We get much the same thing in *Beyond the Horizon*. Robert Mayo, one of the dark-eyed type of male character, longs for what is "beyond the horizon". He plans to go to sea in his uncle's ship. O'Neill makes him stay on the farm. Andrew Mayo loves the farm, but O'Neill forces him to go to sea. Andrew had loved Ruth, but she marries Robert. Needless to say, she finds out later that they are mismated and that she should have married Andrew. By the time Robert dies and Andrew and Ruth are free to marry, Andrew finds that he no longer loves her—in fact, he hates her. Have not the torturing frustrations gone far enough? No, O'Neill gives his characters another whack: he has Robert just before his death elicit from Andrew a promise that he will take care of Ruth. The play ends on the idea that Andrew will marry Ruth. And Ruth? How does she react to Andrew's implied proposal? Is she at last to know happiness? "She remains silent, gazing at him [Andrew] dully with the sad humility of exhaustion, her mind already sinking back into that spent calm beyond the further troubling of any hope . . . as the curtain falls." So every-

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thing that Andrew wants, Robert gets; and everything that Robert wants, Andrew gets; and Ruth, too, gets only frustration and disappointment. Here again, the complete and perfect frustration of the characters destroys all suspense. The audience knows what is coming; after the first act, they can predict the action of the rest of the play.

Dramatic irony is the gentle, mocking laughter of the gods, but for O'Neill it becomes a taunting sadism. The plays I have cited are not isolated cases, for the over-use of dramatic irony to the point where it ceases to be either dramatic or ironic is just as characteristic of O'Neill as his over-use of violent death and suicide. It is another mechanical means of evoking an exaggerated emotional response from the audience even though it sacrifices artistic unity.

The audience derives pleasure from tragedy through a catharsis or purging of their emotions. This catharsis comes from reflection on the play. In melodrama the emotional response is too violent to be satisfied in this way; there must be a more immediate satisfaction. For this reason the happy ending is used in melodrama to so great an extent. It must not be supposed that because so many O'Neill plays end in death or suicide that these endings are necessarily unhappy. On the contrary, almost all the plays end either happily or on an optimistic expression of hope. *Lazarus Laughed* ends with the hero being burned at the stake; but the ending is happy, for Lazarus is happy even while he is dying—he laughs for he knows that there is no death. In *Desire Under the Elms* the hero and heroine are marched off to jail for the murder of their child, but they are happy for they are now certain of their love for each other. *All God's Chillun Got Wings* ends with the heroine becoming insane but the ending is a happy one. The insanity brings her back to her childhood days and once again she becomes her husband's sweetheart. So too, in *The Great God Brown* and in *Beyond the Horizon*, the audience gets the smug satisfaction of knowing that the hero, although he dies at the end, has triumphed and the villain has failed even while appearing to succeed. It is hardly necessary to add that there are a number of plays such as *Welded*, *The Straw*, *Strange Interlude*, and *Anna Christie* where the ending is the conventional happy one of lovers meeting or being reconciled and living happily ever after. The happy ending is a necessity in the melodrama and so it is not to be wondered at if O'Neill includes it in his box of tricks. He cudgels his heroes, who are projections of himself, with what can only be described as masochistic fury, but he makes it plain just before they die or commit suicide that they have in reality triumphed.

V

O'Neill has been called a great dramatic experimenter, but I think the value of his experimentation is greatly over-rated. He experimented first with expressionism, chiefly in *The Hairy Ape* and in *Emperor Jones*. Both plays are psychological studies with almost no dramatic power. Yank in *The Hairy Ape* is only a symbol who never succeeds in coming to life. He draws no sympathy from the audience and seemingly none from the playwright. He is merely a puppet responding to O'Neill's tugs at the strings. Jones in *Emperor Jones* is no more real than Yank. The play is a monologue which describes the successive mental states which fear and hunger induce in the central figure. In this play O'Neill introduces one of those novel tricks which have enhanced his reputation as an experimenter. From the beginning of the play to the end, the audience hears the

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sound of tom-toms. The tom-toms begin in a steady rhythm of seventy-two beats per minute, the rate of the normal pulse. Then as the play progresses the speed of the tom-tom is gradually and continuously accelerated until at the end of the play it is going at a feverish pace. The physiological effect on the audience is obvious. The psychological effect of the tom-tom is produced not through the speeches and actions of the characters, but directly by the sound itself. And the monotonous rhythm acts as powerfully on the audience as it does on Jones in the play. It is not my purpose here to discuss the propriety (in an artistic sense) of substituting for a more substantial plot structure a mechanical device in order to create the atmosphere for the play. I would merely point out that the tom-tom in *Emperor Jones*, although a new device, produced no change in the established technique of the drama. The use of the tom-tom is a trick whose only virtue is its novelty: it cannot be used again and it has not been used since.

In *The Great God Brown*, O'Neill tried another experiment. In this play the characters at times wear masks which are intended to symbolize the duality of their natures. When a speech is expressive of the outward character, the character which the world sees, the speaker wears a mask; when he speaks according to his true, inner nature, he takes off the mask. This "experiment", rightly considered, is merely a method of labelling the speeches of the characters. It cannot be considered an advance on modern dramatic technique. Indeed it is a step back, for only a poor artist needs labels to make his intentions clear.

In *Strange Interlude* O'Neill uses another type of label, the aside. Here the actors deliver the lines in the usual manner but follow each speech with an oral expression of their thoughts. In other words, the audience is treated to a series of explanatory notes on the true emotions of the characters in the play. It is a confession on the part of the playwright that he cannot express himself in the dramatist's medium.

This experimentation is intended only to hide defective craftsmanship and to tickle the fancy of the audience. It is mere pandering to the taste of the moment. The intelligentsia whose patronage has raised O'Neill to his present eminence, blinded by their intellectual and emotional romanticism, mistake these little tricks of the showman for bold originality. O'Neill shows them a succession of thin-skinned poeticules and they hail them as tragic heroes. He paints a picture of a chimerical, daydream world and they shout, "It is true reality". They mistake extravagant "purple passages" for poetry and a maudlin bathos for power. In short, they call that tragedy which is merely violent and unbalanced melodrama.

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A PORTFOLIO

ANGELO IN CHAOS

With Apologies to "Lorenzo in Taos"

by Frances Woodward Prentice

(Written to explain to Ring Lardner, who I know will understand more than any one else my experiences with Sam Stebbins, that rare soul whom I compelled to Southampton for a few unforgettable weeks. I call him Angelo, Lardner, because I think it's more fun to.)

You see, Lardner, as soon as I saw you at the speak-easy that night I was conscious that you and I should know each other. I get conscious like that. Conscious of all the come and go and here and there and—Well, *you* know. Conscious. Sometimes.

So I want to tell you about Sam Stebbins. He was living down on Beekman Street, and I was way off here in Southampton. And somehow I felt there was something I could give him. Something that Southampton has, which Beekman Street has not. I know you will understand. I knew he would understand. I was conscious that he and I should know each other. I get conscious like that. So I wrote him a long long letter. I told him all about Southampton, and all about myself, and how my wilful intuition told me that he would be the one who could really understand and appreciate. The letter was so long I had to send it by express. And I sent a diamond wrist watch to Minny. (Minny is Stebbins's wife, Lardner. I'll tell you all about *her* later!) I thought the watch would make Minny understand. That night I had a special delivery letter from Stebbins:—

Beekman Street,
New York.

Dear Frances Woodward Prentice,

I had your letter this afternoon. I looked at the monogram and nibbled the Tiffany embossing on the envelope. I think we would like to come to Southampton. But maybe you are not practical, Frances Prentice. Minny and I are very practical. Maybe you could tell us what the fare is? One way? And how are housekeeping conditions at Southampton? I don't suppose they could be worse than they are here. But I'd like to know. And is your cellar pretty well stocked? I am sensitive to atmosphere. So I would like to know. I believe I have heard of Southampton somewhere.

I think I should like it there. The rich natural flow of living. The boom of the unclean waves. The menace of the beach clubs. These are the things which I am now ready to experience. But I hesitate. I have decided, on thinking it over, that we had better not come.

nos bonos.

S.S.

Could you send us a time table? And will I need a dinner coat? The wrist watch for Minny has not come. Maybe you'd better get the insurance company to put a tracer on it for you. But I don't know how those things are done.

You see, Lardner, how instantly the current was set up between us. I felt his whole self going out to me. I felt my whole self expanding to meet him, after the postman had brought me this special delivery letter. Soon another came.

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Beekman Street,
New York.

Dear Frances Prentice,

I have as good as decided not to come to Southampton. Is the little house you speak of lending us on the Dunes ready for us? Minny has a cold. I think we should get away from here at once. I have mislaid my check book.

Cui bono?

S.S.

Minny's wrist watch has not come.

After this letter I felt so wild, so free, so conscious. I knew that a great new current was set up in my life. They arrived the next day. How shall I describe my first sight of Angelo? I think the thing I was conscious of, instantly, was that he and I were conscious. Minny was not conscious. A huge, insensitive woman, ugly and stupid. Poor Minny! Compared to other women! Compared to me, for instance! She was quite outside the current, Lardner. But there was Angelo! I had triumphed. He and I together in a great current. I told them we were going to ride back from the station on bicycles. A tandem for me and Angelo, and a single with a trailer for the trunks, for Minny. Minny glowered at me. Angelo said, "Oh, damn bicycles! I want to master all bicycles!"

Then I knew, Lardner, that he was conscious of our current. I was so happy. My heart had been asleep so long.

We all went roller-skating that night. Henry Ford, and Stowkowski, and Bishop Manning, and some women, and the Stebbins, and me. I have quite a reputation, you know, for getting the right people together. The other women all looked terrible. Especially Minny. I was dressed as an East Indian dancing girl, because I knew that would please Angelo. I looked lovely. He said he didn't want to skate, and I pleaded with him. Finally he said, "Oh, get the hell out of here!" I was so happy. So we skated. We skated faster and faster and faster around the rink. We knocked everybody down. You should have seen Minny's face when she and Bishop Manning crashed in the middle of the floor. I ran my skate over her hand, as hard as I could. I was perspiring, and looked wonderful, and Angelo, who did not know how to skate, clung to me. Minny looked terrible. I was so conscious, and so happy.

Then we talked about his work. He said he had already gotten a hundred and fifty words out of *Use Phillips' Dental Magnesia*, but that he didn't seem to be able to go on. He thought it was Minny's fault. Minny kept suggesting two letter words, which he couldn't use. At that rate he'd never win the competition.

"You need something new and more conscious, Angelo," I said. "You are through with her. She has been the wife of your contests too long. You need a new wife!"

"She won't let anyone else help me. She hides the dictionary," he said helplessly. "And don't go trying to push yourself in, either."

So that was that. I was so happy. He hated us both.

They moved into the house on the Dunes. Angelo began working then on *Footsies are Kind to Your Feet*. But Minny was always worrying him, and getting between him and his work. I could see she was, although he kept telling me that he was perfectly happy with her. But you know, Lardner, how I can see beyond what people say, right into their hearts.

After a while Angelo said he didn't want to see me at all, and wouldn't let me into the house I had lent them. But I dropped in for breakfast every morning, anyway. Minny would be looking terrible, and I would come in fresh and lovely and smiling, in my Indian costume. I breathed power those days.

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Angelo would look up irritably from his grapefruit, and say, "You again! Why can't you let us alone! Go away!"

Those wonderful, intimate mornings, Lardner! He was attracted to me almost beyond his strength or his fear of Minny. Some letters I had from him at that time will show you what I mean.

I used to send him ten or fifteen letters a day, and every now and then I would have an answer. I was sending my current to him, day and night.

Dear Frances,

I left two handkerchiefs in the top drawer of the bureau at your house. Please have them sent to me. I have a cold. Will you ask the grocer to leave *two* pounds of spinach tomorrow morning? Do you know where we can get hold of some good squabs? Minny has a cold. I can't understand your letters. You are a terrible woman. No, don't come for breakfast tomorrow.

stabat mater.

S.S.

How he wanted to see me! I had to accept it, as life has taught me to accept all great experiences. We were caught in our current. One day I got him in a room in our house and locked the door, and had a good cry. I cried and cried. I asked him if he wanted to kill me? "No-o," he said in a hesitating voice. "Not exactly. I just can't stand the sight of you." I kept right on crying for hours and hours. I felt wonderful. Finally, "For God's sake let's get out of here," he said tenderly. He was turning to me like a plant to the sun.

I had a letter from him the next day.

Dear Frances,

No, we won't come to dinner tonight. We don't want to meet your friends. I have a cold. Please send over a new frying pan, more blankets, and the largest size meat platter. Minny has a cold. Our mail has not been delivered. Please send it over, and also the smallest adze you have in the house. I have mislaid my check book.

cum laude.

S.S.

You see how it was, Lardner, what it had grown to. I knew he and I could not hold out much longer. I had a lot of women friends staying with me. They were all ugly and stupid. They all said they had never seen me look so well. I had given up the East Indian costume then, and was wearing a simple-stuff tunic I had designed myself. I looked wonderful. I was so conscious of the current between me and Angelo. So happy. So remade. So dominant, yet so submissive. I sent him a twenty-page letter to say I was coming to lunch the next day, to have a long talk, and perhaps a good cry, and some roller-skating or bicycling.

Dear Frances,

Yes, do come to lunch. Only tomorrow we are going to be out.

S.S.

How life bubbled and unfolded for him and me, those days! I wrote him a dozen times more, and then had this:—

Dear Frances,

All right. *Come* to lunch, then. I have a cold. Please bring the mail and six packages of Shredded Wheat. Minny has indigestion. Please bring eight tall glasses. I have mislaid my check book. Try to be sane and calm, Frances. It will be a new and difficult experience for you, but worth while in the end, when you are rid of all your feelings.

Best regards to your mother and family.

S.S.

How about that wrist watch of Minny's? It has never caught up with us.

When I got there for lunch the next day they were gone.

Well, Lardner, that is about all there is to tell. I know you will understand. A won-

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derful experience. I am conscious of the strange secret way in which you are conscious. I think I have something to give you. I am conscious that Southampton and you and I and Angelo are all part of a beautiful difficult consciousness. I gave him a great deal. But not all I have to give. The irony of it! I enclose time table.

MUTTERINGS IN AN ANCIENT GROVE

by Arthur Machen

"From envy, hatred, and malice", prays the Litany, "Good Lord deliver us." Black vices all of them; immorality of the most essential kind, since they proceed from the soul of the man, not from the body merely, like the "immorality" of conventional —and corrupted—popular teaching. And of these three forms of wickedness, the strangest is envy, since it has no material justification, no rational incentive. You can put up a sort of defence for the vice of covetousness. Covetousness is practical, even though it be villainous. Here is a man with an ox and an ass, and I have neither. I covet the fellow's cattle, and I will do my best to get them from him for my own use and benefit. At all events covetousness has a material good in view, and can plead a defence in reason. But envy is a sort of transcendental form of vice; it is, like poetry and music, beyond reason; a corruption of the higher, not the lower, parts of man.

To use a familiar idiom: you get nothing out of it. A few years ago, I was talking to a most eminent man of letters; and he was giving me a brief, rough sketch of a little play he had in his mind to write. The period was the sixteenth century; and Bacon, with vast designs hidden deep in his mind, hovers about the Globe theatre in Southwark. Something about one of the actors arrests his attention, and he asks the man's name. "Shakespeare." The name attracts him: perhaps the contrast between the gallant and knightly picture in the word and the mean condition of the poor player who bears it amuses the mighty sage; and he determines that this illiterate actor, with barely enough of letters to learn his part, shall be the mask through which Bacon is to utter profound, immortal wisdom.

"I like the notion," said my author. "It appeals to me very much. I think I shall do it."

I wondered why he liked the notion. I asked him if he were a lover of dons—the learned, professorial class.

"No," said he, "it's not that. But the thought of pulling down the great figure of Shakespeare entertains me."

There you have envy. Note that, as I have pointed out, it is quite irrational. The envious man, if he succeed, gains nothing, since he only magnifies Bacon at Shakespeare's expense. He has not even the horrid satisfaction of the Puritan as he hacked and destroyed the carved work of the churches. The Puritan could boast that he had lessened the beauty of the world to an appreciable extent; but the Plays remain, whatever you say about their authorship. But there it is, and there you have the root of the portentous folly called Baconianism. It has certainly brought about its own punishment, by beguiling its professors into such an abyss of imbecility as the world has never known before. It has gone far beyond its origins and primitive doctrine: that the plays accredited to Shakespeare were really written by Bacon. It has made Bacon the author of all the great literature of the age, both English and foreign. Montaigne's *Essays* and Cervantes'

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Don Quixote are expressly claimed for him; and these claims are justified by arguments which would be quite incredible if they had not been advanced. The occultists have taken a hand in this queerest of queer games. Bacon, they say, was the founder of the Rosicrucians and the Freemasons; and he was the secret director of the papermakers, who embodied the concealed wisdom of the persecuted Albigenses in their watermarks. It is all hideous balderdash. Its very existence is a sort of miracle of nonsense; and it is all the result of the strange vice of envy.

And Shakespeare is by no means the only victim of this extraordinary passion. Mr. E. F. Benson has just written a book about the Brontës, and to my astonishment he revives in it the fable that Patrick Brontë deserves some of the credit given to Emily Brontë alone for her book, *Wuthering Heights*. Nothing that can be called evidence is adduced to prove this assertion. A great deal of old literary gossip and idle chatter has been told anew; but repetition cannot turn what the soldier said into evidence. Emily Brontë was reserved, averse from society, difficult of approach. This is true; what is not true is the deduction: therefore it is impossible that she should have written *Wuthering Heights*; with the further deductions that Patrick Brontë must have written it for her, and that Charlotte, accepting the book as wholly and solely the work of her sister, was a deliberate liar. It is all wild extravagance; as wild almost as the Bacon-Shakespeare delirium, and like it due to the mysterious sin of envy: the desire to lower a high figure. It is strange; but there was an attack directed against this high and tragic figure of Emily Brontë from another point of view. Between forty and fifty years ago, somebody —I forget his name—wrote a book in which he asserted that the story of *Wuthering Heights* was, in fact, the story of the Brontë —or rather, Prunty—family in Ireland; that the Pruntys had been dispossessed and ruined by an interloping Heathcliff; and that Emily, writing her book, was merely retelling the family legend, as she had received it from her father. Proof? Not a vestige of proof, not a scintilla of evidence; no reason to suppose that there is a word of truth in the tale: and yet it proceeds from the same motive as the assignation of the authorship to Patrick. The process of thought is more obscure, far less offensive in its method, far less repugnant to ordinary common sense; but the trend of it is plain enough. If Emily Brontë were no creator, but merely a reteller of a family tale, then, evidently, she is by no means so great a person as we supposed. The end of the one attack is as the end of the other.

By the way, and quite apart from the main argument, it is odd to note how men vary in their tests as to the possibility of one or another having written the books assigned to them. The Baconians say that a man who wrote such a vile and crabbed hand as Shakespeare could never have written the Plays. But when Charles Kingsley received a letter from Dean Stanley one morning, he took it to the window, and said at the end of ten minutes: "I am sure this is a beautiful letter of dear Stanley's, but, so far, the only word I can read looks like 'damn'." And Andrew Lang had a special compositor assigned to him at the printing house—the only man who could read his "copy". Shakespeare's father was a general dealer, and so they say that Shakespeare could not have written the Plays. Keats's father was a groom, who married the widow of the man who kept the livery stable in Moorfields; but they do not say that Keats could not have written the poems. Shakespeare has been called a "yokel"

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—the American equivalents are, I believe, "rube" and "hayseed"—and so they say he could not have written the Plays. But Hogg, the Ettrick shepherd, was, by his origin, an illiterate boor and remained a boor all his days; yet nobody denies his authorship of the exquisite and mystic *Kilmney*. I do not know why the standard applied to the one is not applied to the other.

Well, envy, as we have seen, is a hideous vice, highly to be avoided—especially since it leads us to make such dreadful fools of ourselves. And, yet, the toad, ugly and venomous, envy has this use: that it is a witness to the existence of the secret dweller in man, that strange creature who is both above and below him. Envy, as I said, is a transcendental vice, a sin of the spirit, not of the body. Man has his habitation in the streets and in the market-place; but he dwells also in an ancient grove. He hears there the soaring of the nymphs: *hic cantat et saltat aeternus nympharum chorus*. But he hears also the evil mutter of the Ægipans.

ARNOLD BENNETT'S UNFINISHED NOVEL

by Dorothy Bennett

ARNOLD BENNETT'S unfinished novel, *The Dream of Destiny* (published in the volume entitled *Stroke of Luck*), provokes in the minds of reviewers and readers alike the inevitable question, what was the plot to have been? Inevitably, also, there has been guesswork as to the general mood and key of the book. As the person with whom he talked it over on several occasions, I think I ought to state, to the best of my ability, what his intention with regard to the novel was, and "the feel" that the book had to him. On one point I can be quite precise. The novel was just one-third finished when he laid down his pen one evening, the evening before our departure for a brief holiday in France.

As always, before he wrote a word of the novel the "general curve" of the story, its construction and its characters, were clear in his mind. He planned to get one-third of it finished before he took a short holiday, and he knew exactly to what point in the story one-third of it would take him. He saw the next portion in general outline, though not in detail; he could not have laid down his pen during the writing of a novel if he had not already seen the outline of what lay ahead.

The idea or plot of a novel lay in his mind for months, in some cases for years, before it became in his own word "ripe" enough to be written. He kept it gestating, growing out of its primitive inception as an idea until he had what he called "the feel of it" absolutely clear. He distrusted quick growths or merely cerebral "notions" about a plot. He had to let the idea grow and ripen in *feeling*. This is what lay behind the crisp, easy readability that gives the sensation, on perusal, of words lightly tossed off in an excess of technical facility and zest.

The idea of this last novel was quite different from anything he had written before. Its difference and "newness" was, I think, one aspect of it which pleased Arnold Bennett, the man. Arnold Bennett the artist seemed, where a novel plot was concerned, to be in the grip of an idea rather than to be its arbiter. His plots, as it were, chose *him*.

A multitude of different experiences and ideas had latterly interested him which were not at all the ideas that had interested him in the past. Einstein, Eddington, Dunne (in his book on dreams) were the writers who

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led Arnold Bennett to the sources of the ideas which began to absorb him (or rather which he absorbed, in his own way). And from these sources—especially, perhaps, from Dunne's book *An Experiment with Time* (although this could by no means have stood by itself as a source of his ideas)—he became fascinated and enthralled by the particular story which is the plot of *The Dream of Destiny.*

The idea was, as ever, months in generating before he began the task of the long novel it was to be. During this period he wrote the plot in short story form, though told from a different angle and with different incidents. In this form it appears in the last published volume of his stories, *The Night Visitor,* where it is called *The Dream.* It appeared to excite him greatly, this story of a dream which was to be fulfilled in nearly all details correctly, but with just enough of the details wrong to give the hero reasons for ignoring the terrible similarities between the dream and the facts as they were unfolded by destiny.

As readers of *The Dream of Destiny* know, it concerns a man who is about to marry the girl he loves when it dawns on him that all the circumstances of their courtship and relations are almost exactly duplicating the events of a very vivid dream he has had: a dream in which the girl the man married went to her death in childbirth. The first time Arnold spoke of the story to me, when he came to the point where the news was brought, just before the marriage ceremony of the hero and his bride, of the rector's sudden illness and of the curate being hurriedly found to take the service—one of the salient incidents of the dream—Arnold broke off and asked me with the unmistakable signs of excitement in him (a slight trembling and slightly higher register of tone in his voice, and an access of his speech impediment), "What do you think the man did? Do you think he married the girl, or do you think he cleared out?"

My reply is immaterial; it certainly wouldn't have influenced Arnold Bennett, although, apparently, he wanted to have it. At that time he didn't know himself what the hero did. It was some weeks before he began the story.

Was it a strange foreknowledge of what he could not factually know, or was it merely the newness to him of his theme, which made him more than usually communicative to me about this particular plot? I have often wondered. Before—with *Lord Raingo,* with *Accident,* with *Imperial Palace*—the plots had lived with him for months and even years, but although he had discussed the subjects and "schemes" of these books, he had never spoken of their detail of *plot.* Especially not from the time he began actually to write the books. He always said it was better not; that he could not talk about his novels in detail without losing some power; that people were as they were, and it might help or be natural to some writers to talk over what they were about to write, or had just written—indeed he knew some writers to whom it was absolutely necessary —but that he had always found it impossible, or in any case a grave mistake.

The *themes* he certainly spoke of, especially in the "gestation" period. And, again reverting to the idea that his plots seemed to choose *him,* he always spoke of the theme, or idea, that was haunting him as of a definite concrete fact from which there was no escaping. It was as though he said: "In Italy there is a great chain of mountains, like a kind of backbone, and they curve down, so; and there are plains here by the sea, and along that coast there are islands which have

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never been properly explored; you see . . . there? And then at this southwestern point there is an island called Sicily".

One could take it or leave it. It was a fact. One might say, "What a marvellous and exquisite country, what possibilities, what fresh discoveries, what beauty quite unsuspected". If one did, his face was "lighted from within". He was deeply pleased. He would discuss it further and sit crackling his palms together with a funny little noise, which I always privately likened to the cock-crow of Peter Pan. Such moments obviously enheartened him in his theme.

And his theme would go on generating.

Or one might say, "I don't quite see that country. It seems to me that it has been much travelled in. I can imagine other countries less banal, more thrilling and beautiful". If one hinted such an attitude about his theme his face would look rather battered, rather lonely, a little closed up. He would say no more.

And his theme would go on generating.

Who can suppose creative artists work otherwise? Yet with so much cant about artists *versus* masters of technique, it is perhaps of some value to state these facts about Arnold Bennett, the artist: of all English writers the man who was, despite his variety of manner and matter (a variety which was necessary to the refreshment of his brain, not of his pocket), an artist for art's sake; and for his own art's sake. He never conceded to the public's desire, on account of his success with one "picture of a life-sized policeman blowing his whistle", to paint (or write) other "life-sized pictures of policemen blowing their whistles".

But I must return to *The Dream of Destiny*. With perhaps the same unknowing foreknowledge which was the actual subject that had gripped him, he created a new precedent and spoke of the actual plot of the story. For a time he was, I think, uncertain himself of its *dénouement*. He seemed to be reaching out in time—a new and relative sense of which had latterly come to him—in order to find the story's continuance or final curve. And he *had* to speak of it. True, he said he thought it was "in my line", which may have given him an apparent reason to talk it over with me. The country was truly unexplored, an uncharted trans-oceanic country newly rising from the sea, and he was excited enough to wish to communicate a purely explorer's descriptive thrill to his nearest companion. He was excited and enthralled; he saw it with the eyes of a man who was himself already preparing for the unknown, for a long journey. With the eyes of a man who had indeed already journeyed far and was daily going farther from the safe, well-known pleasaunces of this earth.

It was not a story in his lighter vein, not a fantasia; and yet its plot belonged to the order of fantasy. He wrote the one-third of it that he did complete with a curious ease and lightness; but the lightness was an aerial quality, not a trivial or flippant one.

Finally he told me: "The man went away. He couldn't stand it". He got married, though; for the news of the clergyman's stroke only came at the church itself. Then he decided. He didn't go on the honeymoon. He cut and ran. He was sure he'd be as good as a murderer if he stayed. And he let the girl annul the marriage. Long afterwards, he heard that she had married another man and had a child, that she and the child were alive and apparently happy. And then at last, as it *seems* to me, Arnold said that the man wrote and told the girl why he had disappeared after the marriage ceremony.

The maddening, tantalizing thing is that

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I cannot remember this last *exactly*, for I was not forewarned that I was to be the sole recipient of the story's plot. I know I *wanted* the hero to write and explain his conduct after the marriage ceremony. I cannot remember, in attempting to clarify this discussion, whether Arnold said the hero *did* do so, or whether he said "Oh no, he couldn't do that because of the shock to the girl of awakening thoughts of himself".

The story was neither "sad" nor the reverse to Arnold. It was an absorbing spectacle. It was life, truth, to him, or he could not have written it. Its import was the tossing of man's life on the seas of destiny at this point in man's evolution whereat destiny can reveal herself to him, in snatches as it were, and where the knowledge thus revealed is put to man's developing moral sense to grapple with.

HOUSMANESQUE

by Hugh Kingsmill

What, still alive at twenty-two,
  A clean, upstanding chap like you?
Sure, if your throat 'tis hard to slit,
  Slit your girl's, and swing for it.

Like enough, you won't be glad,
  When they come to hang you, lad:
But bacon's not the only thing
  That's cured by hanging from a string.

So, when the spilt ink of the night
  Spreads o'er the blotting-pad of light,
Lads, whose job is still to do,
  Shall whet their knives, and think of you.

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NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE'S BLUE CLOAK

A SON'S REMINISCENCES

by Julian Hawthorne

IT occurs to me as perhaps a fitting introduction to this recital of seemingly trivial matters to refer to an anecdote in Swedenborg's *The Earths in the Universe*. After ransacking Heaven, Hell, and the World of Spirits, Swedenborg was inspired to visit the earths in our own little solar group. He was our star reporter in a literal sense. The things he tells about our neighbours are not always of a kind to warrant newspaper scareheads; he was deficient in what editors regard as news sense; but one item in his small volume made a dent in my memory. After investigating our home circle he had launched out into free space and come ashore on a nameless planet beyond the Milky Way, several light-years distant, perhaps. There he saw a man conversing with a woman, a woman dressed in a long blue cloak. Presently the man seized the cloak from the woman's shoulders, put it on his own, and walked off with it. Swedenborg made a note of the incident and returned to Sweden from that immeasurable journey of his, out and back.

After some years' reflection, I incline to think that his sense of news values was correct. What do we care about the laws, history, and geography of that remote little lump of matter? A moment's idle curiosity is satisfied—and then no more. But the rape of the blue cloak gives us pause. Those two people were of our kin, and it is something to know that our common human nature is found across that gulf of space "to the life", as we should say. There are no strangers in this universe, and it is the trifles that betray their likeness to us.

In the same way it is our own trifles that count right here at home. I know all about Julius Caesar as history and anthology depict him; but how would he have behaved about that blue cloak? The historians are prone to such lapses, forgetting that the Eternal Ages watch and wait for them. Mankind's story is soon written, on a single sheet of foolscap; but the tale of the individual is another matter. Tom, Dick, and Harry have each their blue cloak, which is both their peculiarity and their common badge. If the housewife in Aldebaran lets her kettle boil over, or her man forgets his necktie, it helps us if we know it; we can gossip with them in their chimney-corner and feel at home. So it turns out, after all the thunder and after all the shouting, that the famous Concord Group, for instance, were just folks at bottom; we may sound the depths of Thoreau's Walden, and even of Emerson's Sphinx, but it is always important to know that Emerson's boots creaked during one of his lectures, and that Thoreau went sulky when the Selectmen yanked him out of his hut and put him in Concord jail. We are always comforted by surprising our heroes in their slippers; their robes of state convey no distinction.

I have been occupied of late in composing

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a volume of my boyhood reminiscences. I had been fortunate in having the Concord Giants for playmates, and in supposing that all other boys were similarly privileged. So when in later years I attempted to recall them, the robes of state were missing in my picture and the slippers and dressing-gowns remained. This was especially the case, of course, with my own father; and favourable though my own estimate of him was, it was strictly home-made and uninfected by the *popularis aura.* I saw and knew him simply as the handsomest, strongest, greatest, and best of mankind, who could do anything and was everything; not the author of *The Scarlet Letter*, but Papa. He died before I was old enough to see and know him otherwise.

But, upon trial, I find it difficult to convey this simplicity to the unprepared reader, or even, myself, to live back into the time when it was the stuff of my daily life. One may not actually forget such things, but they put on invisibility just at the moment when one wants to lay a finger on them; as if nature were herself shy of letting us into her real secret chambers. Had I been a small boy when Cheops built his pyramid, how invaluable would have been my disclosures of the household gossip of that period!

My father early acquired the gift of looking on rather than joining in—whereas Emerson was always ready to speak, and remarked of his friend, after the latter had sat all the evening in the high conclave without uttering a word, "Hawthorne rides well his horse of the night". The dark-browed young man was not the less desirable company because he was more hospitable than talkative; whereas Emerson couldn't open his mouth without letting escape an Emersonianism. Hawthorne, at bay before the British after-dinner speech, would twitch his shoulders and his eyebrows in a way he had, and let fly something curt and piercing, hitting the goal; the hearers would first chuckle at the wit of the statement, and then sober up at the penetration of it. At the Boston Saturday-night dinners, Hawthorne was always keenly desired, although he seldom attended; when he did, as some *vis-à-vis* remarked, he usually brought a good appetite with him. He ate well at home, too, though our table was almost as simple as Baucis and Philemon's: vegetables, a leg of mutton, rice or tapioca pudding, water cool from the well. For breakfast, we had buckwheats or pandowdy, or both—tall piles of the former renewed at will and, to keep them hot, a wonderful metal platter which was an heirloom from the Pilgrims, a double-decker with hot water between decks; then, molasses from the West Indies, which poured out stiff and black as ebony. Apples, cherries, strawberries in the Lord's seasons; hot cocoa and fresh milk. Such was the physical basis of the romances produced in the study upstairs.

Broad shouldered and very strong, Hawthorne, like his forbears, was always lean rather than fleshy: five foot eleven and his top weight 178 pounds. He could walk all day, with a long swift stride which he modified only for my benefit. His hands were large, well-shaped, powerful, and skilful with tools. His rough understanding of carpentry and mechanics resulted in toys for the children, sheds, and shelves for the household. The talent was probably derived from ancestors who had to do things for themselves. In England, he let me get acquainted with tools in a carpenter's shop, so that I could make the little two- and three-foot sloops which were my addiction for several

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years. He had an eye out for my proclivities no doubt; for the "accomplishments of a gentleman", too: dancing, riding, small-sword, and sabre. When I was seven he sent me to a gymnasium in Liverpool, and had a portable exercise-machine shipped to the Wayside. He also instituted our tussling-bouts: he would sit in his easy-chair, and bid me "Come on!" I would fly at him like a little windmill, and we would grapple and wrestle heartily, he to get me across his knees, I to resist to my utmost: shouts of laughter, grunts and outcries. When he got me in position, the conflict terminated in a redoubtable, old-fashioned spanking, and he laid on sincerely. It was the only kind of spanking I ever got, corporal punishments being disallowed in our *ménage*; standing in the corner was the severest penalty. In the end I found a parry for the spanking—tickling him under the knee, which my prone posture facilitated. He was very ticklish, and the rules of the game didn't forbid it, so the spankings were abbreviated.

The author of *The Scarlet Letter* was a liberal statesman in his own kingdom. In his intercourse with his children he often had recourse to "magic"; when inexplicable things occurred—"Oh, that was my magic!" He was a living Wonder Book, and we never could catch him out. Invisible Pucks and Robin-Goodfellows haunted our walks and our diversions at home. But perhaps the most surprising thing that took place was not magic, but family prayers, which happened soon after we came to England in the 1850's.

At that epoch (and down to this day for aught I know) it was the custom of good English families to have prayers every morning before breakfast. There was a book containing prayers for every day of the year; it was composed by some orthodox divine of the Church of England, and a copy of it was in every family. At the appointed hour a bell rang, and the servants entered the sitting-room, where the children and their parents were already assembled. After the servants were seated the Head of the Household would open the book at the right page and read the brief prose exordium. Then we would all get up, turn round, kneel down, and the prayer for that day would be offered up. A serious ceremony, and inevitable as death and taxes. Indeed, servants demanded it as one of their perquisites, and regarded with suspicion any departures from it. We were Americans to be sure, but on the other hand, our father was a Consul, and bound to do as the Romans did. So we prayed according to Hoyle for the better part of four years, and prospered exceedingly.

We had always been and kept on being religious, but I never knew of what denomination. Unitarian seems the most likely; but what Unitarianism was I was never told, or asked, or knew, except that it was good Bostonian. That our parents were profoundly religious could never be in question, and they rhymed perfectly, our mother expressing her faith and reverence (upon occasion) in speech; our father in caverns submarine and unsounded, yet somehow apparent; he had that faculty of speech without utterance which is said to have belonged to the most ancient peoples. Thought and emotion might be discerned in his eyes, if you had eyes to penetrate them; but usually you could see only sunny plains and sierras which suggested merely a prevalent state of mind. His reverence for the holy of holies was so profound that I never recall hearing him speak the name of the Almighty except in reading; it probably reverberated in his depths, like the tremor of a remote earthquake. As for the mysteries of Christ, they

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were never touched on; and the "One God and Three Persons" was left unchallenged. But I remember that in English churches, when the Creed of the Church of England was repeated in unison by the congregation, I was admonished to sit down—to indicate, I suppose, that I reserved judgment. I might read the Story of the Miraculous Conception and Birth in the New Testament, however, without restraint. Of course, I believed it, partly because I never heard it disputed.

The mask in which my father commonly concealed himself, both at home and abroad, was a lightsome irony. Othello remarked that a man could smile and smile and be a villain; but my father's smile hid only love and wisdom. It appears even in his love-letters to my mother, before and after marriage; the light beneath the depths. We understood it and would have been perplexed by its absence. By his smile he meant that real things cannot be spoken: the concrete is the symbol of the spiritual—an application to daily life of the ancient esoteric wisdom, Divine Philosophy being not dull and crabbed, but musical as is Apollo's lute. That is my interpretation of our daily intercourse at the Wayside and elsewhere. So sermons heard in pews were what an Oxford Senior Wrangler would have pronounced supererogatory.

Whatever the circumstances, I always thought of him as a sure companion. Once when we were crossing the River Mersey in one of the little paddle-wheel steamers that plied between our home in Rock Park and Liverpool (a half-hour trip) we had gone down in the cabin to avoid a shower. The vessel was crowded. There came a sudden violent jar and stop, followed by outcries and shrieks. I looked at my father for my cue: his countenance was serene, and when a young fellow came headlong down the companionway and seized one of the iron pillars which upheld the deck overhead, an expression of quiet amusement flickered at his mouth. Obviously, a collision was an unimportant matter, and even if we sank, what of it? So I shared his amusement at the general dismay, and looked on at the tumult with interest but with composure. After ten minutes of confusion and fear our steamer proceeded on its way, and the terrified passengers were calmed, giggling and chaffing each other over their own consternation. But we had run into a big coal-barge and barely escaped foundering. Five deck-hands and the captain made up the crew, as against two hundred men, women, and children in a panic. The gangway to the deck was narrow, and at that juncture impassable. If my father and I could have forced our way on deck, we would have been in the middle of a rough stream a mile wide; alone, he might conceivably have swum it, but not with me on his back. And his wife and daughters were unaware and tranquil in our home in Rock Park. All that probably passed through his mind, yet he didn't stir. Was it fatalism or trust in God? I have often thought it over since then. To let me be frightened could only have made bad worse. Death was perhaps a minute away, but he chose to sit still. There could be no courage stouter than that. When the way was clear, we went on deck and watched the crew patch the crushed place in our bows. A big piece of tarpaulin was slung over the gap, and the whole affair afforded me much entertainment.

At that time he was reading aloud to us Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. I beheld the knights with their shining armour, their crested helmets, their lances and Excaliburs, and pined to be one of them. "Be faithful, brave, and true in deed and word!" was the obligation of knighthood. My mother, per-

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ceiving the moral advantages of knighthood, and the stimulus afforded to the inward by the outward boy, promptly coöperated with Fannie Wrigley, our ideal English servant, to fit me out with a suit of armour and a helmet, on the crest of which blazed the Dragon of the great Pendragonship with wings outspread and a golden tail streaming down behind. It was made of thick pasteboard covered with silver paper, and in the sunshine in our back garden my aspect as I pranced to and fro was glorious. My father contributed a real sword of tempered steel with a gilded hilt and a scabbard of black leather, on the model of the regulation naval weapon of the period, but of dimensions suitable to my inches. Meanwhile I took riding lessons (though not in armour!) and the Corporal and the Major made me an all-round swordsman. I must have been quite a formidable little tyke, but with the appropriately chivalrous manners of knighthood. No doubt Edmund Spenser would have been gratified. Tennyson's Round Table came later, and the creed of his knights was graven on my memory. I afterward made an "illumination" of them on a sheet of vellum, and presented them to my mother.

To be able to read aloud acceptably is not common and probably is rather a gift than an acquirement. I once heard Fanny Kemble read a play of Shakespeare's; it was a triumph of art, but I was so busy wondering at the reader's clever changes of voice, tempo, and expression, that I had no leisure to note which play it was; besides, Fannie's sumptuous person was robed in a Victorian *décolletage* of velvet, lace, and gems, the splendour of which distracted my attention. My father, on the contrary, would sit in his easy-chair under the astral lamp, with his high stock and collar removed (at his wife's insistence), one knee crossed over the other and one slipper flapping at ease, the book in his left hand with the fingers over the top, and the story flowing from his lips. Personages, dialogue, and scene seemed distinct, as in life. I don't know how he did it; it must have been some spontaneous discrimination of the soul. And all was rich with the modulations of a voice unrivalled in my experience before or since: Edwin Booth came nearest, but even in him the trained professional could be discerned. With my father it was all simon-pure nature.

This was his gift. He could have had no practice in his "dismal chamber" in the old Union Street house where he sat solitary for a dozen years learning how to write. There was no oratorical training at Bowdoin College; and he and his few intimate friends afterward had no call or use for speechmaking. These home readings were then actually his first essay in the art. He read to us almost all of Scott, prose and poetry; parts of Byron, Wordsworth, De Quincey, Macaulay's Roman ballads, Mark Antony's speech over Caesar's body—but never a Shakespeare play as a whole. At times, I think, in spite of his warning to me against the profession of letters, he would test my literary taste and judgment. "Should you say that a pigeon 'winged its way', or that it 'flew'?" "Oh, 'flew', Father!"—and he was pleased. In the crisis of a great scene in Scott's *Quentin Durward* an unexpected character is about to enter. "Who?" he demanded, laying down the book and turning his eyes on me. When I instantly gave the right answer, he smiled at my mother:—"The Old Boy seems to understand!"

As a boy at school in Salem, he learned his lessons easily, but was averse to schooling and irregular in attendance; he was similarly independent at college. I don't

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think he anticipated scholarship from me, but wanted me to have the contacts. He died in my freshman year. I was seventeen and in most ways juvenile for my age; we never had any serious man-and-boy talks together. My mother afterward told me that he had been content with my fortune thus far; but no doubt he would have wished me at least to take a degree. My inclination, however, was all for war, and in the last months of his life he did not forbid my enlistment. He had always stimulated my patriotism with his tales of our Revolution, so that I thirsted for the blood of Englishmen, though I much liked those I happened to know. In our Civil War I transferred my British animosities to the Southerners; but they fortunately escaped my wrath by the Peace of Appomattox. Besides, I had become the Head of the Family, and mustn't leave them unprotected.

My father was averse to fine raiment, though in England he was obliged by the dignity of his office to keep sufficiently supplied with black broadcloth. At the Wayside a humble sack-coat sufficed him, and for Boston he would put on a talma (as it was called), an overall garment half way between a long, loose top-coat and a cape, of a fashion handed down from old times and affected by middle-aged gentlemen. Fields had one like it. He wore it well, and it suggested the title of "Field-Marshal Hawthorne" that Fields gave him. In fact it was made of fine imported English material, not manufactured then or later in this country; its style was becoming to my father, and he had worn it in the years before his marriage. It must have been quite thirty years old when I first remember it, but good as new. After my father's death, my mother had the stuff made over for me into an up-to-date Prince Albert coat; for ten years after it was my best garment. In color it was a very dark Navy blue.

I had not then been informed of Swedenborg's adventure on that outlying planet; but this might have been the original cloak and have served the whole family at need. It would have been a detail worth preserving and well preserved. But my father would never have lifted it from his wife's shoulders to his own—he wasn't that sort of man. So it may mark the difference between the Orion stage of civilization and that of New England in the middle of the last century. We Yankees have our foibles, but a talma like Hawthorne's would have been presentable in any society in the Universe.

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A SELECTED SHELF

DAWN IN RUSSIA *by Waldo Frank* (SCRIBNER'S. $2.25)

EVER since the dawn of the nineteenth century, which brought with it so many horrors, there has been recurrently popular a type of philosophical writing which can only be described as a subhuman parody of everything that had theretofore been considered philosophical. Its characteristic is a certain inflated illogicality which conveys a specious feeling of great depth and which is unfortunately only too often taken at its face value. If this style of writing be combined with a talent for the melodious phrase, its practitioner is sure to be hailed, for a time at least, as a profound and original thinker.

This relatively new literary idiom, consisting mainly in a certain "melodious vagueness" (the phrase is Mr. Frank's, and I thank him for it), is not confined to the philosophers; it is what must always disfigure for later generations the works of the great Romantic poets. It is what inspired that despairing impatience which Jeffrey could never overcome in his otherwise just reviews of Wordsworth and Shelley and Keats. It is what has disgusted so many a man of sense with all poetry and philosophy. The method in its essentials is relatively easy: its principal resource is the conjunction of the most unlikely adjective with the most unlikely noun; its recurrent theme is a repetitive and sometimes ridiculous emphasis on the Three Great Naturalistic Mysteries: the Eternal Child, the Eternal Woman, and the Fertile Soil.

America has no more able living exponent of "melodious vagueness" than Mr. Waldo Frank, and this is the more unfortunate in that Mr. Frank is often capable of fine, straightforward English prose. Mr. Frank's publishers tell us that he "has secured an international reputation for his facility in depicting the essence of an entire people". In *Dawn in Russia* Mr. Frank himself admirably characterizes this facility. He tells us that he is going to "study" the face of Russia, to study it, however, "not with the will or the mind (I am on a vacation), but with the lazy eye of intuition". Now no one with a flair for laziness, let alone intuition, would deny Mr. Frank his right to a vacation, and then to writing a book about it, but when the book assumes the tone of a profound philosophical analysis, even a lazy critic may be pardoned for objecting.

Perhaps a sample will convey Mr. Frank's method:

> The morning sun is high: there, spread in fertile haze before us, is a green plain whose nearer margin is the Volga. The cosmic scene has no true limits. The mist of the sky fuses in meadow, and meadow in river. On the river are boats and barges; they are long, graciously rhythmed, they too partake of the melodious vagueness. Only the town is different; its formlessness, below us, is sharp and hard. The world of plain and sky and water is a fertile quiet chaos; but the disorder of Nizhni Novgorod, whose streets are strewn about on bank and hill, is shut, hectic, splintered. I feel at once that the land is stronger than the man within it. . . .
>
> The Volga is a sluggish flow, here where the Oka joins it. It is easeful, drifting down the

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world like our *izvostchik*; dozing interminably down into the Caspian Sea. I feel that it is poised between two worlds. The right bank, steep and accidented, where I stand and where the town adheres, is Europe. Beyond is the infinite flatness of another world. Asia! The beginning plain that does not end to the Pacific. The Steppe, Siberia, Mongolia, the Gobi Desert, Manchuria . . . flat and limitless world: sea for nomads, tiding from the east against the Volga, against this barrier of Europe. And I feel an equipoise of forces. The Asiatic tide pressing from the east is balanced here by the high will of Europe, whose symbol is the Dyatlov mountain on which I stand. Horizontal meets perpendicular, and is equated. This is the Volga—and Russia.

Apart from the fact that this grand pathetic fallacy, like many of its *confrères*, completely ignores such miserable facts of mere geography as the Ural and the Altai Mountains, it must be seriously criticized for a far more dangerous failing: its almost mesmeric effectiveness in conveying a judgment to the reader without definitely stating it or justifying it. Mr. Frank is in literal fact merely saying that Russia is a large country; that it is an agricultural rather than an urban country; and that its people have in them a considerable strain of the oriental: all incontestable facts, and facts which in themselves alone do not have any proper moral connotations. Yet Mr. Frank's melodious vagueness unreasonably invests them with a tremendous moral significance—in this case of goodness. Somehow everything he says, including, perhaps especially, his final extraordinary mathematical whimsicality, conveys a highly favourable impression for which is given no jot of reasonable justification. It would be possible to cite many other instances of Mr. Frank's mastery of this method of philosophical reasoning. All his attacks on Russian Christianity are made by its means; so also does he justify, without in any way considering its economic basis in raw materials, relative efficiency, et cetera, the present Soviet attempt to industrialize an admittedly rural civilization overnight.

It must be granted that throughout *Dawn in Russia* the reader will find many pages of felicitous description, of admirable reporting. They would deserve the warmest praise if they were not constantly vitiated by that bogus profundity which has ever been the Nemesis of those philosophers who take too seriously the findings of the "lazy eye of intuition".

HARRY LORIN BINSSE

THE REVOLT OF THE MASSES *by José Ortega y Gasset* (NORTON. $2.75)

To ATTEMPT a summary in brief space of the thesis which this work puts forth would be an impertinence on the part of a reviewer, for *The Revolt of the Masses* is pre-eminently one of those books which live and have meaning only in their own context. This is surely one of the marks of any truly original contribution to philosophy. Another mark, one which puts a mere reviewer under an embarrassing disability, is the acceptance of the contribution as being original and worth studying in its own context by at least two consecutive generations. Whether *The Revolt of the Masses* will continue to have meaning for future readers is certainly not worth debating here; but that it has meaning for every self-respecting intelligence today can be most emphatically stated. For here is one of those books which must be taken into account by anyone who would pretend to be conversant with the life of his time. In this it is like the work of Spengler, or of Freud, or of Karl Marx. One may disagree; every word of the book may arouse one's hatred or contempt. But one can ignore

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it only upon pain of cutting one's self away from one's age.

For the sake of those who like to know what they are "in for" before they undertake to spare the precious time and effort which the reading of philosophy requires, something should be said to correct the extremely false impression which is given by the English title of *The Revolt of the Masses,* an impression which is accentuated by the jacket and cover designs. The book is bound in a red cloth of violent shade, stamped with a style of lettering and a design of black rectangular masses distinctly suggesting Five-Year Plans, concrete dwellings, and all the other conventional signs of the proletariat. The jacket suggests even more strongly that the author is a convinced Modernist, and perhaps even a Marxist. The final touch is the omission of capital letters from the title: a form of typographic design intimately related to the meaningless kind of modernity of which Ortega has himself, in this very volume, written one of the best condemnations:

> He will be a wise man who puts no trust in all that is proclaimed, upheld, essayed, and lauded at the present day. All that will disappear as quickly as it came. All of it, from the mania for physical sports (the mania, not the sports themselves) to political violence; from "new art" to sunbaths at idiotic fashionable watering-places. Nothing of all that has any roots; it is all pure invention, in the bad sense of the word, which makes it equivalent to fickle caprice.

But its English title is undoubtedly the most misleading external aspect of the book. We, in America at least, have come to equate the word "masses" with manual labour, with the "lower" classes, the proletariat. This is not at all what Ortega means by the "masses".

> By mass . . . is not to be specially understood the workers; it does not indicate a social class, but a kind of man to be found today in all social classes, who consequently represents our age, in which he is the predominant, ruling power.

The "mass-man" is the egocentric, the leaderless, the immoral man of all times; he is the "spoilt child" of the modern world, automatically created by modern plenty and modern leaderless democracy. He is the man who knows nothing about art, but knows what he likes, and what therefore everyone else must like, willy-nilly. He is the practitioner of lynch-law; the scientist with opinions on everything, which he believes to be true because he does know everything about one little thing; the "philosopher" without philosophy. Essentially the mass-man is the intellectually lazy man; the man who has no real standards other than what Socrates called "opinion".

What has just been said—and quoted—from *The Revolt of the Masses* perhaps better than a detailed analysis will serve as a taste of what the book is like, and will serve to indicate that here is a work whose sheer belief in itself, whose brilliant definition of things which any intelligent person has "half-thought" all his life, must make an impress on its generation, whether the generation welcomes it or not. Perhaps it is sufficient that the book has already been read, in Spanish, French, and German, by those who mould our thought, and that it has already moulded theirs. It might almost be said that the intellectual of today will have "read" Ortega even if he never hears of Ortega's book, just as every intellectual has "read" Freud without necessarily ever having laid eyes on a single work of the Viennese physician. In the opinion of the present reviewer, the inevitable influence will in this case prove far more salutary than the other

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has been. But regardless of its merit, it is just as inevitable.

HARRY LORIN BINSSE

THE PERILS AND FORTUNE OF THE DUKE OF OSUNA *by Antonio Marichalar* (LIPPINCOTT. $3.00)

RECORD of a life totally unworth recording, product of a pen incredibly artistic for its own sake, with the outlines of its subject indicated only hazily beneath the richly jewelled cloak of essays with which the author has enveloped him, this biography of the Duke of Osuna might well be considered a final monument to the brilliance of autotelic *Lebensgeschichte*—that form of biography for its own sake which has threatened to become the only type of biography known to us today.

This Duke of Osuna—the twelfth, to be exact—emerges from Señor Marichalar's reconstruction, to one otherwise unfamiliar with his life and deeds, as one of those innumerable, colossally unimportant nineteenth-century dandies with which Victorian nobility, at home and on the Continent, was so liberally sprinkled. His greatest accomplishment, which took all of his lifetime, was to waste and far exceed one of the hugest fortunes and patrimonies in Europe. His lesser virtues included a reputation for being one of the best-dressed men in Spain, and, as far as one can judge from Señor Marichalar's occasional anecdotes, one of the most ill-mannered in Europe. But in all of these things, great and small, he was really nothing more than a copyist with unlimited means at his disposal; Brummel was better dressed, and the Duke of Alba a bigger snob. The twelfth lord of Osuna, plus one hundred and forty-seven other titles, lives best in one delicious bit recounted by his brilliant biographer. It seems that on one day of his tenure of office as Ambassador to St. Petersburg, Osuna was late in arriving at an imperial audience. "It was a closed session, and had already begun. Osuna slipped in, silent and irritated. The Grandee of the Grandees could find no chair, so, unfastening his ermine cape he rolled it up and used it for a seat. When the meeting was over, as they were leaving, an attendant came after him with the jewelled cape he had left on the floor. Osuna waved him aside saying that the ambassadors of Spain were not in the habit of carrying away their chairs."

But one must return to the biographer. Señor Marichalar's style fully deserves the term brilliant. He writes an exciting prose which has the context and texture of the Goya *Caprichos*: sentences are physically detached one from another yet objectively related as are the proverbs and the figures of Goya's prints. All of these qualities, it is to be hoped, will one day find a subject more auspicious than His Grace of Osuna. If they do, one could wish for no more excellent and sympathetic a translator than Señora de Onis, nor for a handsomer presentation than Messrs. Lippincott have given the present work.

ALFRED VON DOHNA

VAN LOON'S GEOGRAPHY *by Hendrik Willem Van Loon* (SIMON & SCHUSTER. $3.75)

MR. VAN LOON has always taken to the world with admirable gusto. He likes it; he chuckles frequently about it; he is fascinated by the way the earth wrinkles and the seas flow; he enjoys the good things that that earth and those seas provide, as no one who has examined his respectable girth needs to be told; and he is even inclined to be tolerant about the people who have inherited the earth. It seems rather a shame, therefore, that he is still so fearful that we shall all go

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to the bow-wows if we do not take stock of ourselves, consider by what tremendous effort we have wrested a living for some two billion human beings from an evidently hostile environment, reflect upon our interdependence, and stop this suicidal nationalist tommyrot. Indeed it is in the hope of making a modest contribution toward such an end, he says, that he has written this book.

Though it may be debatable whether such a desirable object can be approached by this method, the object is unquestionably desirable. And though it may be queried whether any popularization of knowledge, in spite of Mr. Van Loon's implied protests to the contrary, ever does more than go in one ear and out the other, his book is both instructive and entertaining. His *Geography* is, to use Vidal-Lablache's term, a Human Geography, a study of the earth in its relation to man. The French geographer devoted a lifetime to such a task, and left it unfinished at his death in 1918. The amiable Mr. Van Loon of course does not pretend to any such monumental contribution to knowledge. It is enough for him that he has given the public an excellently printed, amusingly illustrated, and entertainingly written combination of geography book, history book, travel book, and book of Questions and Answers, full of imagination, inspired with at least the elements of a sense of history painfully lacking among Americans, and marred only by the rather broad statements of fact which books designed for popular reading seem to require.

There is no space here to question the current belief that a passive public can be lured into understanding by so simple a process as giving attractive presentation to the facts upon which understanding is based. Nor is there space to discuss the other question which inevitably arises in connection with such a book as this: namely, has the effort to simplify resulted in misleading conclusions? One may, however, list a few of the author's "liberal" prejudices and a few of his self-contradictory views as they are expressed or implied in his book, and let the reader be the judge. Mr. Van Loon is, for instance, apparently prepared to accept the notion of the survival of the fittest; yet he is for justice to others and against the exploitation of primitive peoples. He is inclined to scoff at the idea of race in the ethnic sense, and to explain the accomplishments of a race in terms of its environment; yet he stands in wondering silence before the indisputable fact that two similar environmental conditions often produce utterly different results. And if we were to depend upon this book for information we should be convinced that the sole activity of the Catholic Church has been the repression of science and the fomentation of war.

But these are somewhat abstract considerations, and, as Mr. Van Loon is the first to admit, he is "not a philosopher". He is, however, an unusually excellent journalist, which in this case is more pertinent; and from this point of view the Book-of-the-Month Club has done well to make *Van Loon's Geography* its September choice.

ALASTAIR MCKAY

A NEW DEAL *by Stuart Chase* (MACMILLAN. $2.00)

MR. CHASE has long been troubled by the fact that the capitalist system as it has existed in this country during the past seven or eight decades is an astoundingly wasteful and an extraordinarily illogical thing. He has of course not been alone in this feeling. Gradually, however, thanks to a tremendous enthusiasm, a disarmingly reasonable style, and an unusual capacity for becoming outraged

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at human illogicality, presumably arising from much study of other people's balance sheets, he has made himself the acknowledged leader of a considerable group of similar-minded persons. And it is fair to say that he is today the most important representative of those who believe that our troubles can be solved by the application of scientific thinking to human affairs, and who are convinced that we are inevitably headed for the kind of change advocated in his present book.

To summarize Mr. Chase's thesis in detail is out of the question. Suffice it to say that in general he is after what most of us would be very glad to see: a more equal distribution of wealth, the elimination of waste in distribution, and economic security for both the state and the individual. To bring this about he has two basic and complementary proposals, both of which he makes sound overwhelmingly reasonable. He wants to direct our economic system from the top for the benefit of the community as a whole, with scientists and technicians in charge. And concomitantly he wants to minimize so far as possible what he calls "the sixteen [economically disturbing] methods of getting rich", which arise directly from a competitive economic system organized for private profit.

Thus barely to outline his thesis is in itself to treat Mr. Chase unfairly. To go on to say that it is a radical or a collectivist thesis is also unfair, because Mr. Chase is a model of moderation in this respect, and his immediate proposals are not only no more radical than Mr. Hoover's but a good deal more consistent. To say that his proposals are admirably logical but manifestly impractical would be still more unfair, if only because he builds up an extremely persuasive case for them in the course of his two hundred and fifty pages. But it may be less unjust to point out, in a book which is admirable for its logic, a few of what many will consider the gross errors of understanding into which that logic has led. And fortunately a man of Mr. Chase's ebullience usually provides us with plenty of indications of the way his mind is working.

It early becomes clear, for instance, that Mr. Chase has some very surprising notions about economic life. He apparently not only believes that it is something completely apart from all other aspects of life—and incidentally much beneath them—but he proceeds to treat it as such until indeed one suspects that he does not really consider it a part of life at all. "The goal . . . is short and simple: to abolish economics as a major problem; to . . . give mankind at last an opportunity to breathe deeply, and to live." "At bottom the conception of economic planning is science supervising a people's housekeeping. Not its morals, not its play, not its loves or its living." Under a proper system, he says, "economic activity . . . with its four to six hours of work a day, becomes if not a minor, at least a subordinate consideration. More important will be the problem of how to live".

Once Mr. Chase has thus clarified the issue, it is evident that his proposals rest upon two fundamental assumptions. The first is that new motives can be substituted for the motive of private profit. The second is that the proper people to administer the planned economy thus made possible are scientists and technicians. As to the first, Mr. Chase is enthusiastic:

> The shift of ambition and the goal of success towards public service, science, research, the arts, industrial management, statesmanship, and away from sheer accumulation, would be the happiest and most welcome change which could happen to contemporary civilization. Every week college men write to me or come to see

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me asking, almost with tears in their eyes, how they may devote their lives to something more useful, more charged with dignity and integrity than selling bonds, peddling insurance or "going into business". After the revolution they will have no need for faltering advice; a hundred blazing opportunities will invite every trained and intelligent man and woman.

As to whether scientists and technicians, backed by the men and women who, like Mr. Chase, "have grasped the hand of science", are the logical administrators of the new system, Mr. Chase is equally clear:

> We propose then a National Planning Board . . . supplemented by regional boards . . . manned by engineers, physical scientists, statisticians, economists, accountants, and lawyers. . . . The real work, the real thought, the real action must come from the technicians: that class most able, most clear-headed of all in American life, hitherto only half utilized in technical detail and in college class-rooms. Here, O boys and girls who come to me to ask what you may do to serve the commonweal, is opportunity as great, as thrilling, as any generation, save perhaps in Russia, has ever known.

Now there are many people who will suspect that all this is so much tommyrot. They will have grave difficulty in envisaging millions of workers perspiring in the interests of service to the state and the smooth working of the planned economy, rather than merely "going into business", and in picturing Wall Street millionaires purging themselves of their speculative urge (as Mr. Chase seriously suggests) by buying government lottery tickets. They will have to scratch their heads pretty hard to recall any impression they may have had that the proportion of capable and responsible administrators among scientific and technical men is noticeably higher than among any group of people with a high-school education, if they do not actually suspect that the reverse is true. And they will be hard put to it to convince themselves that there will be less buck-passing in a bureaucracy of engineers than in a bureaucracy made up of any other kind of reasonably human being. I do not say that they will be right and that Mr. Chase is wrong. I do say that there are still a large number of them, many of whom are capable of just as sound logic as Mr. Chase. Only they do not believe that human behaviour is as reasonable as Mr. Chase implies.

MARVIN MCCORD LOWES

MEN AND WOMEN OF PLANTAGENET ENGLAND *by Dorothy Margaret Stuart* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $2.00)

PLANTAGENET England (1152-1485) saw what Pollard the historian calls the emergence of the English. During that period the English were bound into unity as a nation. It is the period of which mediaevalists like Chesterton sing, when life was lived gloriously without -isms of any sort. It was homogeneous, knitted together by chivalry, some serfdom, and the Church. Ecclesiastics, who might have been born tillers of the soil, held the reins of national government. The Church almost was the State. Chivalry was based upon Christian charity, for the good knight and the good squire were actuated to help the sick and the poor. Religious communities, such as those of convent and monastery, were not uncheerful places and did an immense amount of good in providing education and enlightenment, on the one hand, and alms, on the other.

The England Miss Stuart describes is this England of Chaucer, Langland, and Gower, when pilgrimages and miracle plays were common; the England of the great cathedrals of York, Winchester, Gloucester, and Wells, of stained glass, of the timber roof and the manor house, and of overeating, ostentatious (or superstitious) medicine (unless it came

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from Salerno), and squelching lawyers' fees. It is the England of simple piety, in whose religion the Virgin Mary civilized and elevated the degraded status in which women had been held, and in which tournaments, jousting, and crusades lent strength to the warlike energies of the race. What people then ate, such as porpoises, seals, bustards, swans, and peacocks, is eloquent testimony to their stout stomachs, just as much as what and how they drank. The divers professions and callings which catered to the prominent classes, the various fine arts of armourer and of many guilds, are also all passed in review by Miss Stuart in an instructive, valuable, and well-written volume, indebted chiefly to manuscripts like the *Luttrell Psalter* and to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. The worth of the book as a summation of the rites and habits of Englishmen which are not to be found *seriatim* in the literature of the time is subtle, but nevertheless large.

JAMES W. LANE

MORE MERRY-GO-ROUND *Anonymous* (LIVERIGHT. $3.00)

THOSE Walter Winchells of Washington, the authors of *Washington Merry-Go-Round*, continue their phrase-making in this sequel. The book has a sprightly, malicious style, but little else. Newspaper men will recognize it as a job of "smart rewrite"; newspaper readers will feel little surprise at many of its "revelations", unless minor gossip startles them.

The writer of "inside stuff" undertakes a hard job. He must be utterly accurate in facts of record, or all he says is suspect. And he must not try to palm off public property as part of his store of special information, now at last revealed to the lucky reader. This book errs in both these ways.

The jacket blurb says, "For the first time in the history of the country, the real inside story of members of the United States Supreme Court is told, who these men are, what they do, why". Those "inside" histories of the justices could be obtained from *Who's Who in America* and the files of newspapers in any large city. There is no evidence, for example, that the writers went far beyond the pages of *The New Yorker* and the New York *Herald Tribune* in preparing that of Justice Cardozo—except possibly to discover that Cardozo once taught law at Columbia University. Columbia regretfully denies this.

The authors of *More Merry-Go-Round* are thoroughly anti-conservative—one of their rare unalloyed compliments is for Senator Norris—and they indict conservatives on the Supreme Court bench of a high crime. They are also spitefully anti-Hoover. For subjects they choose: "Dance of the Depression", dealing with a miscellany of Washingtonians; "Nine Old Men", the Supreme Court Justices; "The Wizards of Reconstruction", Meyer and Mills; "The Cotillion Leader", Secretary of War Hurley; "Gold Braid and Epaulets", army officers; "Adams and His Admirals"; "Chief Cook and Bottle Washer", Postmaster Brown; "The Capital Underworld"; "Muscle Men" and "The Mutes", Senators; "Head Bouncer", Secretary of Labor Doak; "Lame Ducks", and "The Janizaries", lobbyists.

There are, of course, things wrong and things which might be better in Washington, but anonymous smart-alecking is not likely to cure the troubles.

DAN C. ANDERSON

ROGER WILLIAMS *by James Ernst* (MACMILLAN. $4.00)

PRESENTED as the first full-length biography of Roger Williams, this book expounds the thesis that the place of Williams in the his-

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tory of American thought is that of the first American democrat and nonconformist. It is well documented and shows evidence of patient research. But it is a work of unbalanced eulogy, building up a mass of evidence in favour of Williams and taking no notice of the charges that have been levelled against his name by various students of his period.

The Rhode Island pioneer is drawn for us as a transcendental mystic who was the first promulgator of the modern doctrine of freedom of worship and the builder of a civil state, the principles of which have since spread over the entire American union. He is hailed as the forerunner of Jefferson and Madison and as spiritually akin to Bacon, Hobbes, Descartes, and the French Encyclopedists. But there is no direct reference to the classical criticisms against his life and labours.

Twichell the historian, for instance, says that everywhere Williams lingered there sprang up strife in an acute form. Schneider in *The Puritan Mind* asserts that Williams did not so much establish religious liberty on Rhode Island as create religious anarchy so that Rhode Island became a refuge for all sorts of religious misfits. John Fiske sums him up as hopelessly controversial. His biographers, from Gammell to Emily Easton, have generally found something to explain in his contentious life. This present book apparently finds nothing. Dr. Ernst, saying nothing of his hero's hostility towards the Catholics, omits to mention the fact that there was a law in Rhode Island debarring them from the franchise, which law remained on the statute books from 1664 to 1783. In his estimate of the political experiment at Providence he makes no reference to the anterior policy of the Calverts in Maryland. He overlooks the statement John Fiske has made in regard to the beginnings of American democracy. Fiske said that Connecticut had the first written constitution known to history as creating a government and that our system of government today is in lineal descent more nearly related to that of Connecticut than that of any of the other thirteen colonies.

The thesis which Dr. Ernst sets forth is easily credible to those who know nothing about Roger Williams and his times. But the scientific student of the period would have welcomed a less partisan biography. It is a pity that the author, in elaborating his theme, should have failed to take account of the relevant objections.

CHAS. F. RONAYNE

CHARLOTTE BRONTË *by E. F. Benson* (LONGMANS. $4.00)

THREE-QUARTERS of a century has gone by since Mrs. Gaskell brought a hurricane about her ears by the publication of her *Life of Charlotte Brontë*. Since then we have had innumerable biographies of the Brontës, but we are as far as ever from getting an impartial one. Something in the air of Haworth Parsonage seems to go to the heads of chroniclers, and they emerge from their researches in states of violent partisanship.

Although Mr. Benson has made Charlotte the titular heroine of his book he inclines to the Emily-cum-Branwell cult. Poor Charlotte emerges as an acidulous, spinsterish little figure-of-fun, driving her talented sisters and brother with her own furious ambition. Often Mr. Benson seems aware that he is not presenting a woman who could by any sweep of the imagination have been a genius, and at such moments he halts his interpretation to recall to us, flatly, that he is writing of the author of *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*. But the moment passes; we have again the resentful, driving, managing creature before

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us, and the task of re-creating her as the mystery she was is all to be done over again.

This is not to say that *Charlotte Brontë* is not an excellent book. It is one that should be on the shelf of every Brontë-lover. In retrieving Mrs. Gaskell's error of presenting Charlotte as a saint without stain, Mr. Benson occasionally leans too far in the other direction, and presents her as something just short of an hysteric. But he has had the inspiration to tell about her straightforwardly as a woman who was capable of falling deeply, wildly, and indiscreetly in love (though indeed how the indisputable evidence of her love for M. Héger can still be ignored is inexplicable). In building up the character of a woman capable of deep emotion, Mr. Benson quotes extensively from Charlotte's letters to her school companion, Ellen Nussey. These quotations are wild enough, in all conscience, and yet perhaps a protest is again in order: in the middle of the last century a Gothic madness was abroad in the land, and many a good soul poured out the frenzied self-accusation that was customary, that was in fact downright modish, who hadn't a sin to bless herself with.

Mr. Benson has a theory, to me, I confess, more ingenious than convincing, that Branwell Brontë had much to do with *Wuthering Heights*. It is well stated, worth considering, and recommended to all who like insoluble problems.

FREDERIC SHEPARD

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FOUR NEW NOVELISTS, AND JULIAN GREEN

THERE is no rough and ready classification into which Janet Lewis's book, THE INVASION (*Harcourt, Brace.* $2.50) can be crowded, but, since the publishers have very wisely decided to issue it as a first novel, it falls, by my good fortune, into this department for review. Happy as I am at the chance that allows me to review it, I cannot help regretting that the reader who passes by fiction-notices, but whose attention would be caught at once if *The Invasion* were listed as American history, or Ojibway folk-lore, or even as "regional literature", may overlook for some time a delightful and important book. There is no danger that he will miss it entirely.

The gathering and breaking of the wave of the white race over the Great Lakes country, told by following the history of one real family, the Johnstons of St. Mary's, over little more than a hundred years, is the heart of Miss Lewis's story. John Johnston, a young Irishman of good birth, forced to make his own career, chose to do it in the New World, as a trader. "In the middle of August of . . . 1791, a *canot du nord*, or *canot du maître*, a birch canoe of the largest size . . . left Michilimackinac and came by slow stages up the St. Mary's River, past the Sault, past Les Grands Sables, past the Pictured Rocks, and so on along the south shore of Lake Superior." The French had already come, thinly, and receded before the English, but not until they had turned the Indians from their own way of life toward the white man's way of barter and credit. When young Johnston arrived the English were already pushing in, more and more strongly; before his death, less than forty years later, the American wave had rushed over the land.

Johnston, chivalrous and honest, married the Woman of the Glade, daughter of the Ojibway chieftain, Waub-ojeeg, the White Fisher; and he was fully aware of the honour that had been shown him. From a timid child, frightened by the white man and his stove and his bed, the Woman of the Glade turns insensibly into Neengay, "My Mother", surrounded by her handsome, sturdy children; and Neengay turns into the mediator between her husband's race and her own, until the day comes when her son, speaking for her whose father had never failed to counsel them wisely, must tell the Indians that their day is finished: "He explained that the Americans were numberless, that they would keep coming forever, that it would be impossible to kill them all. He said: 'This is the hour in which to choose. This is the hour in which to make them friends or enemies', and ended his oration with this sentence: 'The firing of one gun will bring ruin to your tribe and to the Chippewa nation, so that not a dog will be left to howl in your villages' ". A tragedy has seldom been told more quietly than here.

Johnston died; Neengay dies; her children marry, the gently but hardily reared grandchildren of the old Ojibway chief mingle their blood with that of the conquering race, leaving here and there the inheritance of ivory skin, aquiline nose, dark eyes; and the children who had each two names, an Eng-

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lish name and an Indian name, are gone. "Eliza Johnston was the Woman of the Morning Star, Wahbunnung-oquay; Anna Maria, the Woman of the Red Leaf, Omiskabu-goquay; and Jane, the Woman of the Sound the Stars Make Rushing through the Sky, Obahbar-wawageshagoquay." At last, in 1928, the second Woman of the Red Leaf dies, and the book closes: "O-miska-bu-go-quay, unwaybin".

The Invasion is the best book on an American theme that I have read, and not one moment of its effectiveness turns on over-dramatization, heroics, or special pleading. It is quiet, clear; simple, one would almost say, until the full realization of what the author is doing becomes plain. One watches the first seeping in of the aliens almost unsuspiciously, recognizes suddenly the widening breach, stands appalled and spellbound under the towering wave. In the first chapters the seasons turn slowly; then with gathering momentum the years run; then with a rush lives go by. The wave sloughs back; the Indian encampments are gone, and the trading post, and the council-room which held great men; the "boom" town of the nineteenth century passes, only a summer resort remains.

I have not begun to do justice to the book's richness, nor are the sentences I have quoted the best the book has to offer. Any one reviewer will be able to bring back from his reading, distressed at the poverty of his offering, only what is most significant to him. Others, I hope, will tell in more detail that it was the husband of Jane, the Woman of the Sound the Stars Make, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, who gave Longfellow the materials for *Hiawatha*; that the Indian legends are shown here as the earthly forms of a mystery as deep and subtle as any the complacent white man knew; that sunlight and snow and weather have somehow got into the pages of a book, proving it by passages as lovely as this:

"With May, spring began. He walked in woods that were bare and pure as if the snow and ice had minutely scoured each twig and tree trunk. The leaves of last autumn lay underfoot, beaten together and bleached to the colour of the rush mats made by the Woman of the Glade. It was a tissue like wasp's nest, breaking crisply. The sunlight was brilliant upon it, and above it the poplar trunks assumed a pale velvety green like the wings of the luna moth, the willow withes a new red bark, which from a distance was a haze like wine. The snow had not disappeared, it had merely given way on the higher ground and the less shaded places. It lay in drifts two and three feet deep under the cedars, and a foot away from it, in the hot sunlight, began the uncurling of the silky yarrow, the furred heads of brake. . . . All the small beasts were changing their fur, and there was no talk of hunting. The deer came close to the village; he often saw the two-petaled tracks in the sand. The clearings were full of white rabbits with a dusting of brown across their backs which seemed like the pollen of spring."

The Atlantic Monthly Press's prize for a first novel goes this year to Ann Bridge, for PEKING PICNIC (*Little, Brown. $2.50*). There is very little doubt that the book will be a success. For one thing, its background is modern China, and for another its story is on a model which is already familiar and well liked—although its popularity in this country is rather surprising. *Peking Picnic* is from the younger branch of the *A Passage to India* family, with a trace of Maugham blood on the maternal side. But to be fair it has plenty of vitality and charm of its own.

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The heroine, Laura Leroy, lives with her heart alternately in China and in England, and her body always where her heart is not. Her children are at school in Oxfordshire (and a shadowy lover is in England, as well); her husband's diplomatic post is in China. Between these strong counter-demands on her emotions Laura hangs rootless and suspended, never quite living, never quite dead. The author realizes acutely—if anything, rather over-emphasizes—the morbidness of this state of affairs; but at the same time, for some inexplicable reason, she seems to approve with her whole heart the detachment which follows upon it, as though mere detachment were in itself a virtue, detachment from whatever source, and to whatever end. Laura is, for the most part, almost tiresomely overrated by her creator, while half a dozen more genuinely moving characters are presented with condescension and amusement.

A party drawn from the various households of the diplomatic circle goes off for a week into the country outside Peking. They have chosen the very moment at which an uprising has broken out, but, habituated to and bored by such disturbances, they carry on with their picnic. The artificial intimacy of the expedition, the perils through which they live together, force their casual relations into rapid growth. At the end of the week Laura has loved and been loved again, one of her two young nieces has turned from a girl into a woman, the other has shown herself the possessor of a detachment which is, if possible, superior to Laura's own, and a poor little American girl has died in the attempt to get a soul. (One has grave doubts, before the book is over, whether Miss Bridge would grant that any American could be successful at soul-getting.) For a moment Laura has seemed to be on the point of coming to life; but the crisis passes, the spell descends, and the book closes with the heroine back in her Peking garden, dreaming of Oxfordshire.

Do these Hindoo Holidays, Peking Picnics, Paper Houses, and Passages to India never give rise to an uneasy moment in the tight little isle? One of these days a military gentleman is going to pick up a novel about the conquering race in the Orient; I should not be surprised to hear that there was subsequently a court-martial. Can these books which ignore so placidly the real life of the countries in which they are set, which use the Orient as stage scenery and Orientals as comic relief, ever possibly be written except in the twilight of Empire?

Whether FUGUE (*Dial Press. $2.00*) is Olive Moore's first novel or not I do not know. It gives all the signs of being the work of a very young writer—all the signs from freshness to brashness, to be candid. Its heroine, a hussy whom her author calls (very amusingly) "Miss Reade" whenever she is about to tell you the very bad worst about her, and "Lavinia" or "Lavinia Reade" when, as rarely, she is behaving herself, is a London literary lady from Yorkshire, who at the age of twenty-two has had three lovers, one illegitimate child, and is on the point of having her second fatherless child and falling in love with a fourth man. "Miss Reade", when the book opens, has pursued her third lover to an Alsatian town, whither his fugue has taken him; she realizes that she must lose him, despairs each night, rejoices to be alive each morning, and comes finally to the conclusion that she is fated to be an artist in living, intoxicated with life from minute to heady minute.

There are moments when you are almost willing to swear that the book is as clever

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as its author obviously meant it to be, but they are followed, almost as rapidly as "Miss Reade's" own high moments, by others of depression. The literary and typographical tricks, once seen through, leave one more than a little suspicious. Each paragraph is set flush with the margin instead of being respectably indented, and is set off from its neighbours above and below by quantities of white space. This gives each paragraph the superficial appearance of an aphorism, or at the very least an epigram; but on sober reflection is not the best of the paragraphs this, and is it good enough?

"Miss Reade replied with a bright immediacy (infallible sign that a woman is lying): 'I was thinking that what one most admires in D. H. Lawrence is his sturdy independence. He called a table-napkin a serviette to the end'."

No; although there are few funnier passages in any novel than Miss Reade's conversion to beer-drinking when faced with the dreadful reality of a cow at close range, and although the vignettes of babies throughout the book are invariably lovely and absurd and touching, and though the style frequently has real beauty, this parade of perversity and wit is not good enough from anyone who can write as well as Olive Moore.

Beatrice Curtis Brown's first novel is FOR THE LOVE OF ANTONIO (*Houghton Mifflin. $2.00*). It is the story of a very young Englishman in the Italy of a hundred years ago. He had been sent there to complete his education and to take on polish, but instead he is precipitated into adventure, entrusted with a message to the son of a noble family who has gone off to lead an insurgents' band. It is well written, and the delineation of Richard, individualist to the core, unable to catch the fever of insurrection however dangerously he is exposed to it, is very nearly masterly. Still from page to page the book seemed to promise more than it ever bestows.

Those who are already admirers of Julian Green, or readers who have not yet given him a fair chance, should skip the rest of this review, for I intend to give only a synopsis of THE STRANGE RIVER (*Harpers. $2.50*).

Philip Cléry, a rich bourgeois, weakling son of a robust father, is in the habit of walking home from the office where he is a tolerated figurehead by way of a road along the Seine. One night he sees a drunken workingman and a woman engaged in what is obviously a murderous quarrel. Seeing him, the woman appeals for intervention; but Philip takes to his heels.

Thereafter he must face the knowledge that he is a physical coward. Since he is already a weakling, vain of his beauty, impotent (although in a moment of hatred and fury in the first year of his marriage he was capable of begetting a son), and a cuckold, the prospect is bleak. He returns to his home and to the invariable domestic scene: his sister-in-law, Eliane, fully aware that he is contemptible, loves him past reason; in fact her reason cracks in the course of the book. In the evening, over his magazine, he will sit with Eliane, who will stare at his beautiful head by the indirect method of looking at his reflection in a glass. Henriette, his wife, is away with her lover, a cadging, tubercular scarecrow, whom she cannot escape because she is enthralled by "the sour odour of his poverty". Eliane and Philip from time to time break their silence by tense dialogue about Henriette's sinister habit of taking aspirin, but *praeter ea nihil.*

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For no apparent reason the situation grows tenser. Eliane goes away to a *pension* for a week, sending Philip a letter (which never reaches him) in which she shows all her love and contempt, she is visited by Philip, who wants her to reassure him that he is not growing fat; and she returns, defeated by her emotion, to the Clérys' flat. To her horror she realizes now that she desires Philip, and longs for her sister's death.

Intermittently the ten-year-old son is shown, unbeloved, showered with favours whenever he arrives from his school. His father experiments to discover whether the child, too, is a coward, but Robert has none of his father's difficulties. An attachment as unhealthy as any other relationship in the book springs up between Philip and his son; Robert is removed from his school to one nearer home, and is taken for long walks beside the Seine with his father.

Finally, four months after Philip's desertion of the woman in distress, a newspaper item appears, telling of the discovery of a corpse of just such a woman. Harassed past endurance, and counting on the morbid love of his sister-in-law to reassure him, Philip puts an elaborately hypothetical case to her, of a man who dared not act in an identical situation. But Eliane sees through him and despises him anew. Now at last she will be free from her obsession? No: "Suddenly, with the voracity of a wild beast she threw herself on his lips, paying no heed to the groan of agony which her teeth tore from her vanquished prey".

But Philip survives. He goes walking beside the river with his son. Sending Robert apart from him, Philip goes down to the Seine bank, and with infinite difficulty totally immerses one hand in the water.

Outlined in this way, without benefit of the sustained atmosphere which gives Mr. Green's novels their effectiveness, perhaps the book's story may show why I do not like the work of Julian Green.

DOROTHEA BRANDE

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KEEPING UP WITH THE NEW NOVELS

THE LABYRINTH *by Ina Seidel* (FARRAR & RINEHART. $2.50)

"I PICTURE the earth naked and bare, its mighty limbs as they rose out of the Flood, without the boundary stones of man, without the trail of nations to mar its divine innocence." Thus spake Rheingold Forster, pastor and scientist, who accompanied Cook on his second expedition to the South Seas, who spoke seventeen languages, who ate thirty potatoes at a meal, grew his own vegetables and raised his own hogs, hunted, smoked, drank, laboured, raised a large family, and was one of the most inquisitive and learned men of his day. But George Forster, the delicate prodigy who became as great a savant as his father, hated him for just this superabundant vitality which engulfed all about him and forced his own weaker life through passages foreign to it. Lost amid the mazes of his pursuits as the Gargantuan's apprentice, George came to regard his father as a King Minos whose bellowing Minotaur of life hunted him ruthlessly and eternally. . . . *The Labyrinth* is a fictional biography of George Forster, eighteenth-century natural scientist.

When, his reputation independently established and the immediate bonds of his father's domination thrown off, George Forster married, he hoped his wife would prove the Ariadne to deliver him from the subtle labyrinth of memory. But passion worked obscurely and terribly in him; he, himself, forces his wife to be and to remain untrue to him, the while he plays the excruciating rôle of unsuspecting husband. The death agony is a gentle release for this baffled and terror-stricken wanderer.

These are the outlines of the anguish-laden life wherein Ina Seidel has managed to cram lengthy and erudite polemics on Freemasonry, Rosicrucianism, the liberty of man, and general philosophy, side by side with a rich account of Cook's second South Sea expedition, with countless portraits of celebrated scholars, revelations of the moral and intellectual aspirations of the time, a stirring and imaginative picture of certain phases of the French Revolution, and frequent descriptions of nature which burn with the mystic and fecund spirit of the North. It is an amazing and turbid work. As in some engraving by Dürer, the passion, so bitter and yet so tortuous, seeps through a vastly complex metaphysical system, the ramifications of which lead the mind to bewilderment. For in this miasmatic atmosphere, clotted with the vapours of pain and yearning, breaking only to reveal the mighty and bristling crags of Knowledge, there is a corrosive which disintegrates and granulates the Word, something at once too nebulous and too insistent to be held within the confines of prose, the familiar element which has marked German fiction for redundancy and lucubration.

Written in a rhetorical dialect, heavily interlarded with exclamation, interrogation, and reiteration, *The Labyrinth* does not permit of translation into graceful English. Mr. Oakley Williams's translation is literal and, consequently, often foreign and involved. To those interested in the intellectual life of

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eighteenth-century Germany the book will prove distinctly worth while. But the amateur of fiction may find the Dedalian pattern too confusing to enjoy the many beauties of *The Labyrinth*.

JOHN BRONSON

ROYAL FLUSH *by Margaret Irwin* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $2.50)

ROYAL FLUSH is a novel written about the life of Minette, daughter of Henrietta and Charles I of England, who married Philippe d'Orléans, brother of Louis XIV, and whose story, as Messrs. Harcourt, Brace and Company justly observe, "is so rich and varied that it falls naturally into the form of a modern novel".

The great question in the historical novel is to what extent the novelist has used his imagination. Miss Irwin has had a wealth of material from which to build her book and, from the evidence of *Royal Flush*, she has consulted all of it and made a most judicious choice. Remembering that this is fiction, not biography, one must admire the veracity and authenticity with which the imaginative portions have been written and the smoothness of transition from the presentation of recorded fact to that of the intuitive reconstruction of unrecorded events. This would leave all but a student of this period in doubt as to which was which, were it not that the authenticated remarks and conversation have been so deftly and unobtrusively indicated.

Minette was a fascinating girl who sometimes played the chess of royalty but more often was a bewildered pawn upon its mad board. Her devotion to her big brother, Charles II, was unswerving and unlimited: her romance with Louis XIV was transformed into a mutual affection which permitted her to fill the important rôle of ambassador between the two monarchs. But she was not made for diplomacy. "It had been said of her that to whomever she spoke she offered her heart. . . . The difficulties she encountered all through her life were those of an ingenuous and simple nature in a set of people so closely knit together, so regulated and restricted by the artificial circumstances of their life, that they had become more complicated than any set of people before or after." The author's manifest sympathy for her charming heroine in no way blunts her understanding of those characters, like Philippe d'Orléans, who caused her the greatest suffering. Miss Irwin presents these great historical personages as human beings (some of them very curious ones) placed in circumstances which gave humanity some of its most extreme and most fantastic spectacles of comedy and tragedy. We are shown La Grande Mademoiselle, the Joan of Arc of the Fronde, playing a brutal and humiliating trick upon the child Minette in order to enter the dining-room before her; Minette's husband, Philippe, remarking that she looked very ill and suggesting rouge; Louis XIV, the Sun King, playing Apollo in a public ballet to which admission was charged; Louis XIV, the Sun King, ingloriously booting the behind of his too witty brother; Louis's jealous wife, Marie Thérèse, engaging in a desperate and losing coach race before the entire court and army with his hysterical mistress, Louise de la Vallière; the Comte de Lauzun hiding in the royal privy and under the royal lover's bed to the ends of intrigue.

With no exclusive devotion to either tragedy or comedy but with a philosophic and keenly appreciative comprehension of both, with the liberty which is the fruit of thorough understanding of her subject, with con-

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viction and grace and in very readable prose, Miss Irwin has made, in *Royal Flush*, a distinguished and most entertaining contribution to the ranks of the historical novel.

JOHN BRONSON

THE FAIR OF ST. JAMES *by Eleanor Farjeon* (STOKES. $2.50)

ELEANOR FARJEON has here provided a kind of grab-bag of sugar-plums with an occasional sugared pill thrown in for the good of the gourmandisers. Those who like confectionery will no doubt enjoy the dish, but others may find it slightly distressing.

A young English couple, Jimmy and Laura, go to France on a holiday and find themselves, to quote the author's apology, "in the adorable city of—shall we say, San Fairy Ann?" Why not, if you like that kind of word-play? While strolling about in search of their hotel, the couple come on a gigantic white-and-gold arch, announcing the *Foire St. Jacques*, which leads them to the natural conclusion that a fair is to be held here. They are wrong, but meanwhile the ferrule of Jimmy's umbrella needs mending, he breaks his glasses and has to borrow a queer pair from an optician, they come on a house with a strange legend concerning one Jacques Coeur, find their hotel and a chef with a recipe for artichokes, all of which reduces them to a "state of wonder", in which everything and everybody is exciting. They look for the non-existent fair and have to run home out of the rain, fall asleep in a "chamber that bloomed like a rose", and the rest is dreamland.

Laura is queen of the fair and a disguised king's disguised daughter. Jimmy is Jacques Coeur, an itinerant merchant philosopher who returns in time to rescue France from her troubles. All the interesting people in the adorable city reappear in the dream in strange and significant rôles. There are beggared monarchs and chefs on thrones with the aid of artichokes, hunchbacks married to beautiful maidens, crystal gazers, magicians, and every one of them has a story and every story has a moral. The moral of the whole seems to be that you can't mend a broken heart without tears and a people who never weep are not necessarily happy.

Miss Farjeon has a taste for the charming and inconsequent, which is a pretty taste when impeccable. Here it has run riot and allowed itself to be sicklied o'er with the pale cast of sentimentality. Those who like their syrup straight and in large doses will have a splendid time, and no doubt the disguised pills will save them from the consequences. Which is all wrong as literature, though not, perhaps, as life.

NORAH MEADE

THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF ALOYSIUS O'CALLAGHAN *by Thomas Washington-Metcalfe* (MORROW. $2.50)

THIS is a book to make a right-minded boy steal candle-butts and read himself red-eyed into the dawn. Like all stirring tales of hazard to life, limb, and honour, it is as good meat for father as for son. Better, in fact, and it is a long time since fare as robust and strongly flavoured has been offered to the jaded palates of today's readers. It will be interesting to see how they stomach it. No doubt many will reject it as fit only for coarse tastes, and they will be wrong, for here is some fine earthy writing and a mind that, despite a suggestion of Münchhausen, is reminiscent of George Borrow at his best. Read of Aloysius going to bed beside a horse called Satan or walking in gingerly fashion before a goat of uncertain temper with his

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"behind well tucked in", and you will wonder what has become of your *Lavengro* or *The Romany Rye* and why you haven't missed them before. Not that the book contains any philology or for that matter philosophy, except for Aloysius's awareness that "all is vanity"; but here are people and places and the touch and tang of both.

T. Washington-Metcalfe, whom one suspects of not being Irish, has chosen a strange form for his tale but a fine form for his purposes, since he wished to include the authentic, florid oratory of the servant son of an Irish soldier drummed out of the British army for intemperance. The author combines direct and indirect narrative of events, with Aloysius O'Callaghan doing the talking for himself. The events are those of Aloysius's life, and he sums up half of it on page 206, which will give some idea of its range.

"I started life in a training-stable in Ireland. I've been shipwrecked on a desert island, joined a Dime Museum and been exhibited as Young Robinson Crusoe; went back to sea, became an apprentice, and ended up as second mate. . . . That was five years ago and nearly six. Since then, I have worked in a saloon, in stock-yards, on a ranch; I have even made a bit now and again among the second-raters in downtown prize-rings. And here I am, still nowhere in particular, and in my thirties. . . . I know somehow, that when the luck comes to me, it will be on land, and that it is coming in the end."

It came in the form of a recipe for pickled peaches and a South American revolution in which O'Callaghan helped some old friends to triumph. He became a millionaire, was known as *El Rey* in Santa Anna, and married the granddaughter of the Irish landlord who had given him his first job, not because he wanted the girl to have himself as husband but because he wanted to give her the freedom his wealth insured. It is indicated that he found and enriched his successor for his widow.

O'Callaghan is the type of ambitious, hard-headed Irish adventurer whose mind is never betrayed by his heart, which is not to say that his kindness did not fructify the earth. There was the fiddler he saved from the electric chair. Aloysius describes the effect of his sad music on a mining town dance-hall crowd. "The poor devil started with *Home, Sweet Home*. Did those rough miners brush away the furtive tear, clear the husky throat as they remembered the old days at mother's knee? . . . No, sir, they did not. They burst out into a chorus of catcalls and hoots that fairly frightened poor Sprengler. They didn't want any of those sloppy tunes, they shouted."

Aloysius, however, not only got Sprengler his life but a sweetheart and later jobs for both in a country where the head of the Secret Service was a man appointed by himself. After all, poor Sprengler had only killed a wife who deserved it, and why shouldn't he take a new one without "any sort of preliminary fire insurance in the form of a marriage ceremony?"

O'Callaghan sums up the purpose, if any, of this book. If the young people of today, says he, would steep themselves in the spirit of adventure instead of this damned atmosphere of disillusion, they would retain the youthfulness that every man should prize. O'Callaghan, over seventy, was young on that day when leaning over the rail of his yacht he steamed into Santa Anna amid a shoal of launches set out to welcome *El Rey* home. He had just descried the figure of a big bearded man at the stern of one of the hustling launches. He was about to wave to him—the man who, he hoped, would one day marry his own young wife. "And sud-

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denly it was all dissolved; blackened out in a flash, like a picture on a cinematograph—screen, flick, all gone, all dark, nothing." Aloysius still young was dead in his youth.

At the end of the book T. Washington-Metcalfe puts the letters A.M.D.G., the letters that Irish Catholic school children are taught to put at the head of their exercise books. Those who know their Latin will read them aright.

NORAH MEADE

BETWEEN WHITE AND RED *by Erich Dwinger* (SCRIBNER'S. $2.75)

THIS fine work of five hundred pages cannot be judged as fiction alone; the author has drawn on his own diaries of the Siberian campaign to present what is undoubtedly a document of great historical value. The book is the second of two relating Herr Dwinger's experiences in the World War. The first (published in this country as *Prisoner of War*) dealt with his long sojourn in Siberian prison camps; the present one opens with his entrance into Tchita after his escape. He leaves Tchita for Germany and is forced into the White Army under General Koltchak, the Russian Regent. The greater part of the book is taken up with the retreat of Koltchak's army across Siberia, and it is an account of terrific hardship, cruelty, the inefficiency of the leaders, and, where individuals are concerned, great heroism and forbearance. Merely for the colour of it, the War in Siberia (if one may call the fighting in this book the War, for it all took place after the Armistice) makes more interesting reading than the War in the West. The struggle between the Red and White Armies covered an immense area, and the cause of it, in some sense, was more clear than that of the fight between the Central Powers and the Allies: Bolshevism was arrayed against the defenders of the Czarist régime. That does mean that the combatants could all line themselves up as partisans of revolution or reaction. Brutality and stupidity were too prevalent on both sides to make choice a clear-cut matter; but there were some among Herr Dwinger's fellows who saw that a world issue was being fought out, and much of the horror of the situation lay in how little those who managed the White Army realized this and how much they heeded their own lusts and vanities. The author has succeeded in picturing a terrible chaos and all the bestiality that such a chaos can bring forth; it is in the many examples of confusion and inhumanity that the documentary value of his work lies. But the book is not without its value as fiction, for from its pages breathe many human figures—the Russian officers in whose company Herr Dwinger fought; some heroes, some good soldiers, and some swine; and the German prisoners who had been his earlier companions. The tragedy of these prisoners is one of the most touching things in the book; they were immured in a strange land long after their country had quit the War and were forced to serve the interests of two clashing parties whose ends, unless they saw their larger significance, could mean very little to them.

Shocking accounts of suffering and hardship will never be of much aid in establishing the pacifistic temperament, because men are not by nature pacifists and war's horrors are what make it noble in the sight of men. Herr Dwinger realizes this, and he does not attempt to convince us that men should not go to war because they are willing to die for what they hold sacred. The argument he advances against modern war is a more valid one: that there is no reason why men should rot in prisons, die of spotted typhus,

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and freeze in Siberian wastes because in those regions there is petroleum and platinum from which capitalists can grow yet richer.

For all its plainness of contention, however, there is no pleading in this book, and if it will move men to sanity and compassionateness, it is by the sanity and the compassion which the author and his comrades displayed under circumstances which drove thousands into madness and the bloodiest cruelty.

GEOFFREY STONE

WATERFRONT MARK *by John V. Craven* (KNOPF. $2.00)

IN his first book, *The Leaf Is Green,* Mr. Craven hid some of his light under the bushel of Hemingway; in the present volume he has raised the bushel a trifle, and we can at least be thankful that here is one novel which does not read like a supplement to *The Sun Also Rises.* It must be added, however, that Mr. Craven's differences from the Master are fine ones and perhaps evident only to those who have, as it were, specialized in this school of fiction: the story concerns the usual low grade moron; the conversation is interminable, senseless, and a great weariness; the animal lusts which the characters indulge are never even once excused by any intensity of enjoyment. If one can overcome its soporific effect, it will be found that the story concerns a boy who was ousted from his home and went to sea, was left a fortune by his repentant father, returned to buy his old home and marry the girl who had always loved him, sat around drinking, and, bored, returned to sea, and—here the reader who has persisted at last gets his just reward—is shot while attempting rape. The wearisome conversations are real enough and have a rhythm which, if he wants the distinction, Mr. Craven can claim as his own. Link, the profane pig who is the hero, doubtless is also real; but one must add that a writer like Fielding would have said as much as was needed of a similar character in a paragraph. The drunken scenes are rather true to life—except that of course these fictional sots are more witty than those met with in the flesh, but not sufficiently witty for interesting reading. Perhaps it were better to say briefly that the book is boring trash which, because it deals with whoring and drunkenness, will pass for art. If this seems heavy invective for an unimportant novel, let it be remembered that Joseph Hergesheimer trumpeted Mr. Craven's first appearance, that the book is representative of a strong tendency in American fiction, that there is still such a thing as respect for one's craft, and, finally, that there is a great group of readers whose sole approach to current thought is through the novel.

GEOFFREY STONE

THE RIPENING *by Colette* (FARRAR & RINEHART. $2.00)

THERE are a number of things which distinguish Colette from the ordinary purveyor of erotic titbits and foremost among them is her truthfulness. The writer of erotica does not strive to reveal truth but to excite, and usually his purpose prevents him from even obliquely approaching truth. Colette has a genius which does not require a distortion of facts in order to gain its effects. Her truthfulness is one of the reasons why it is so difficult to place a moral judgment on Colette's work. An immoral work is in most cases false; while it contains a great deal of superficial truth, by which it works its evil persuasion, at the bottom it lies, and sends its credulous readers seeking after things that

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are not to be found in this world. Colette evokes our interest in no ecstasies that do not exist. To a Frenchman, thoroughly used to the conventions that rule her attitude, the question of morality in Colette's work might seem superfluous; it is, no doubt, only the Anglo-Saxon who would think to inquire into it. The artistry and light touch of Gallic love are bywords, yet possibly never completely comprehensible to the Anglo-Saxon mind. Proust's famous comparison of love to a microbe which, despite its infinitesimal size, can lay waste to the noblest structure, when compared to the Anglo-Saxon conception of love as a reciprocation between the parts of an entity higher than either of its parts, to some extent explains the essential difference between the two viewpoints. The first may not be so flattering to man, but it need not deny him all volition; for even Proust utilized his peculiar sickness to produce something which no theory of microbes can ever fully explain. If the Frenchman grants love an origin less divine than does the Anglo-Saxon, and is more insistent on its physical aspects, the Northern man still has no reason to assert his own superior spirituality, for what English writer could so closely concern himself with the same intimacies as Colette and never lapse in taste or soil his pages with the grubbiness which too sharp a cleavage of love into the bestial and the sacred often brings?

I shudder at the un-Latin and sententious nature of the above preface, especially when treating a book by so sharp and delicate a writer as Colette. But a partial excuse may be found in the trouble in being other than repetitious on a new book by this writer. Those who have read her know she will seldom stray from her field of adolescents or men and women in love and they know that in this field she will never stray from the accuracy and sureness of touch which make women attest to her complete knowledge of the feminine heart and men to the fact that she is never dull; they know that Colette will set forth the world of the senses with economy and great vividness. *The Ripening* is about Philippe, a boy of sixteen and a half (the fraction is important at that age), and Vinca, a year younger, who are spending the summer, as they have always done, at the seashore with their families. Against a background in which the reader smells the sea as it pounds the rocks or recedes leaving pools crowded with shrimps, Phil and Vinca swim and fish, while the love which they have long known they bear each other begins to assume new strange depths. To the scene of this idyll, with its serpent which Colette takes pains to indicate, comes the Lady in White, who is twice Phil's age and who initiates him into those things of which he barely has thought in connection with Vinca. The typical femininity with which Vinca meets her discovery of this brings the book to its climax and gives it its pattern, besides affording Colette a chance to display her peculiar skill. Colette, of course, has "done it again", and that should send many to this book eagerly; but she has also crowned her expected triumph by showing that she, who has been called the most feminine of writers, has an understanding of the adolescent male which never once falters. The final scene of *The Ripening*—in which Philippe looks on his young love of the night before and wonders how, after all that has gone before, she can sing so blithely as she waters the flowers—is one which, making the comparison only to indicate merit and Colette's penetration of the masculine adolescent mind, might have been written by Raymond Radiguet.

GEOFFREY STONE

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THE SOLDIER AND THE GENTLEWOMAN *by Hilda Vaughn* (SCRIBNER'S. $2.00)

IT IS painful to be unable to give unqualified praise to a novel handled as well as this one. In few books does one find better prose, a surer portrayal of character, or this unhurried flow of narrative which reveals an author equal to the task and confident of its outcome. Everything attempted here is achieved. The story moves to its culmination with the measured pace which is characteristic of all great tragedies. And yet, though it has been done by English critics, it would be hard to call this great tragedy. The death of an unusually weak-willed mouse is commonly regarded as pitiful rather than tragic.

The story is set in Wales, where passions are strong and consonants stand together. It opens with Captain Richard Einon-Thomas returning from the War to find himself heir to Plâs Einon. The future lies before him offering endless, idle delight. Now the estate, the money, and the social position his father gave up in order to marry a governess return to the son. He considers the girl he will marry, a pretty girl, "a real dazzler", but not one who will be sharp with him. Old friends who have always called him "Scrub" will do so no longer. And Gwenllian Einon-Thomas, his cousin, who has not inherited the home she loves simply because she is a woman, will have to leave Plâs Einon.

But Gwenllian is not easily put aside. Using her complete knowledge of the local customs, the tenants, the language, and the business of the estate which she has transacted in the past so successfully that the mortgage left by her father has been lifted, she becomes the new master's right hand, and more. It is a fair measure of her strength of will and determination that, despite a twelve-year difference in ages (she is forty and no longer beautiful) she succeeds in marrying the confused young man. Incidentally, that this event should be at all credible is a tribute to Hilda Vaughn's persuasive artistry. As one reads, it does seem possible; looking back, it becomes the rotten timber which causes the whole structure to totter. Either it could not have happened, or else Dick Einon-Thomas has nothing where his back-bone should be.

As for Gwenllian, "the gentlewoman", who "denied her love for the sake of a house and a position", who bore two sons for a man she hated and despised, the best that can be said of her is that she possesses the fanatical strength of a mistaken conviction. Without an opponent worthy of her mettle, her crime is only horrible and mean.

These objections are stated not to uphold the reviewer's idea of what sort of people should have stories written about them. They merely seem the probable explanation of why a book possessed of so many excellences should fail of full tragic effectiveness. But Welsh tragedy may have conventions of its own, and perhaps it is wrong to look for the nobility and the attendant catharsis of Greek tragedy in the tale of Dick and Gwenllian and Plâs Einon.

ARCHER WINSTEN

THICKER THAN WATER *by Vera Caspary* (LIVERIGHT. $2.00)

THOSE who, like the present reviewer, have associated the name of Vera Caspary with cheap sensationalism without taking the trouble to read beyond the jacket blurbs of her previous books can do so no longer. According to the publishers this book represents a more serious effort on her part, one

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which will bear comparison with G. B. Stern's *The Matriarch*. They do not overstate the matter. It is an admirable study of a large Jewish family, or rather a group of related families, living in Chicago between the years 1885 and 1931. Within the larger group and its problems of relationship, both internal and external, Miss Caspary shows also an ability to portray the individual. Her success in creating characters who are typical without losing their unique personalities shows an undeniable power.

In its social aspect the story has to do with snobbery among the Jews. The Portuguese Pieras, parrot-beaked and aristocratic, count it a tragedy that there are no Portuguese Jews in Chicago for them to marry. Rosalia Piera lowers herself to marry the German Reisinger. Reisinger is in turn outraged when Julius Smith, a clever young business man, marries into the family and it is discovered that he is a Polish Jew whose mother speaks Yiddish and wears a *sheitel*. And although it can be borne, there is crawling of the family flesh when Rosalia's daughter marries Mark Hyland, a gentile. But there is no holding back the tides set running by money, love, and a new environment. The old orthodoxy fails to hold the children and they are at the mercy of circumstance and their own desires. Their lives uphold no thesis but are stamped with truthful reality in success and failure alike.

The life of Rosalia Piera, proud, ugly, and intellectual, possesses a rare heroic quality. In her, as in Aunt Becka de Silva, there is a suggestion of the matriarch, but the author's indebtedness is to Jewish family custom rather than to Miss G. B. Stern. Miss Caspary has written out of her abundant knowledge with an assurance which defies criticism. It is remarkable that a Rosalia should rise above her strongly established Jewishness to the level where all race is lost in the higher qualities of humanity—remarkable not that Rosalia should have been such a person, but that the author should have succeeded in so fine an undertaking. Nor has she failed in the portrayal of less heroic characters. The adulterous husband, the artist in the family, the glutton, and the money-maker are made human, guilty, pardonable.

In this book, equally rich with character and dramatic incident, there are faults which should not be overlooked. Cast in the form of an intermittent chronicle, it is, even more than might be expected, loose, inclusive, and somewhat haphazard. It ends, rather pointlessly, mentioning the depression. The conception of the novel, that blood is thicker than water, has no force comparable to the merits I have mentioned above. The writing itself sometimes seems hasty, as if the author were embarrassed with the riches at hand and were hurrying to get on with her story. But all of this only proves that when the right material meets the right author lack of artistry cannot greatly hinder the production of something very much worth reading.

ARCHER WINSTEN

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THE BOOKMAN'S GUIDE TO FICTION

General

THE INVASION *by Janet Lewis* (Harcourt, Brace)*
A novel of the gathering and breaking of the wave of the white race over the Great Lakes country. Reviewed on page 518.

PEKING PICNIC *by Anne Bridge* (Little, Brown)*
The *Atlantic Monthly Press* prize novel for 1932. Reviewed on page 519.

FUGUE *by Olive Moore* (Dial)
What happened to a London literary lady from Yorkshire who at the age of twenty-two had had three lovers, one illegitimate child, and is on the point of having her second. Reviewed on page 520.

THE STRANGE RIVER *by Julian Green* (Harpers)*
The story of a coward who does not drown himself in the Seine. Reviewed on page 521.

THE RIPENING *by Colette* (Farrar & Rinehart)
A memorable story of young love in France. Reviewed on page 528.

THE FAIR OF ST. JAMES *by Eleanor Farjeon* (Stokes)*
The adventures of a young English couple in a land of fantasy somewhere in France. Reviewed on page 525.

BETWEEN WHITE AND RED *by Erich Dwinger* (Scribner's)**
Herr Dwinger's autobiographical novel of fighting in the White Army under General Koltchak. A Sequel to *Prisoner of War*. Reviewed on page 527.

THICKER THAN WATER *by Vera Caspary* (Liveright)
A study of a group of related Jewish families in Chicago. Reviewed on page 530.

TRAFTON HELEN *by Jonathan Leonard* (Houghton Mifflin)
With their adopted son—a schoolboy—as *deus ex machina* and a group of New England "peasants" as chorus, the middle-aged Mr. and Mrs. Trafton find their separate quests for renewed youth thwarted.

MASQUERADE *by Jo van Ammers-Küller* (Dutton)*
A Dutch girl loses her chance for happiness because her priggish upbringing has left passion out of account.

PROMENADE DECK *by Ishbel Ross* (Harpers)
Passengers on a world cruise undergo everything from love to suicide. The stereotyped characters—a siren and a spinster school-teacher, a misogynist and a gigolo, a dissolute flapper and a clean college girl—are made extraordinarily interesting by the author's real gift for character drawing.

PEACE BROKE OUT *by Heinz Liepmann* (Smith & Haas)*
A distorted, expressionistic interpretation of the German inflation period, in which hysterical puppets weep, laugh, drink, and have no morals.

THREE LOVES *by A. J. Cronin* (Little, Brown)*
Five hundred and fifty-nine tense pages about a woman who loved too possessively, the objects of her love being her husband, her son, and God. By the author of *Hatter's Castle*.

OUR STREET *by Compton Mackenzie* (Doubleday, Doran)*
Faintly fictionalized reminiscences of Mr. Mackenzie's youth, doing for a London street what Miss Mitford did for *Our Village*. Thoroughly delightful.

THE INDIFFERENT ONES *by Alberto Moravio* (Dutton)*
Not like Aldous Huxley, in spite of the jacket. A tale of double seduction and adultery carried through 300 translated pages of sheer rottenness.

THE MOTHER *by Naomi Royde-Smith* (Doubleday, Doran)*
The Gethsemane of a mother whose younger son transfers his allegiance to his father.

LITTLE GIRL LOST *by Temple Bailey* (Penn)
A twentieth-century Greuze, in which Araminta finally chooses a solid but handsome husband instead of a stage career and a romantic lover.

ALL I COULD NEVER BE *by Anzia Yezierska* (Brewer, Warren & Putnam)
Homely and pungent as sound idiom: a story about the aspirations of a strongly emotional immigrant girl, based upon the author's own experience.

THE MISTRESS *by Gideon Clark* (McBride)
Cheated of her fiancé by the War, a London schoolteacher gets involved with sex. A moving, truthful story in a small way.

THE CHARMING SALLY *by Maud Hart Lovelace* (Day)
For a very private reason the copper-haired Sally deserts the sponsorship of David Garrick and Drury Lane to join a troupe bound for the States. The usual Lovelace vivacity.

* All prices $2.00 except when followed by asterisk, in which case the price is $2.50, or a double asterisk, in which case it is $2.75.

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WHITHER I MUST *by Bridget Dryden* (Stokes)*
Stream-of-consciousness novel concerning the last day in the life of a woman who had loved and suffered. Excellent of its type.

THIRTY CLOCKS STRIKE THE HOUR *by V. Sackville-West* (Doubleday, Doran)*
Two short stories of genius, *The Death of Noble Godavary* and *Gottfried Künstler*, among six others of varying merit.

STROKE OF LUCK *by Arnold Bennett* (Doubleday, Doran)*
Arnold Bennett's last novelette and an unfinished novel, *Dream of Destiny*. Interesting mainly as showing how Bennett's excellence frequently enlivened whole passages of even his most perfunctory work.

THE LONDON OMNIBUS (Doubleday, Doran)*
A novel by A. P. Herbert (*The Water Gypsies*); Coward's *Private Lives*; many short stories, ranging from Aldington to Wodehouse; essays by Rebecca West, T. S. Eliot, Aldous Huxley, et cetera. A good odds-and-ends book for everyone.

Historical

ROYAL FLUSH *by Margaret Irwin* (Harcourt, Brace)*
An historical novel about Minette, daughter of Henrietta and Charles I of England. Reviewed on page 524.

THE LABYRINTH *by Ina Seidel* (Farrar & Rinehart)*
The intellectual life of eighteenth-century Germany in a long novel about the family of the scientist George Forster. Reviewed on page 523.

FOR THE LOVE OF ANTONIO *by Beatrice Curtis Brown* (Houghton, Mifflin)
Adventure comes to a young Englishman in the Italy of a hundred years ago. Reviewed on page 521.

YOUTH MUST LAUGH *by Inez Haynes Irwin* (Bobbs-Merrill)*
A thoroughly innocuous tale of the fortunes of eight New England sisters during the period just previous to the Civil War, so unsophisticated in style and implications as to be uninjurious to the most impressionable of adolescents.

Adventure

THE LIFE & ADVENTURES OF ALOYSIUS O'CALLAGHAN *by Thomas Washington-Metcalfe* (Morrow)*
The title tells all. Reviewed on page 525.

THE SEA TYRANT *by Peter Freuchen* (Liveright)
Whale meat, human blood, and the bleakness of Northern waters in a gory but human novel by a "very plain man".

MAN MADE ANGRY *by Hugh Brooke* (Long & Smith)
A naïve young man comes to London with talents for writing verse and wielding a butcher's knife, both of which he develops in an exciting though uneven tale.

LUXURY LINER *by Gina Kaus* (Long & Smith)
In search of his runaway wife, a physician encounters *Grand Hotel* aboard an ocean liner, and melodrama stalks the decks from first class to third.

Mystery & Detective

THE WOMAN IN WHITE *by Wilkie Collins* (Harpers)
A condensation from the mid-Victorian original (obtainable in many a cheaper edition) by the grand-daddy of them all. You can now whisk through mistaken identities, dastardly plots, and guilty secrets in about seven hours. P. S. She's a swooner.

SUNSET *by Frank Morison* (Century)
Television from constellation Lyra warns London Physicist John Byford of mankind's approaching destruction. Crooks get wind of it and start an eight-day panic, thus cleaning up in the stock market. One murder, one fatal accident, no detectives. A good tale, well written.

THREE DEAD MEN *by Paul McGuire* (Brentano's)
Fractionally better than run-of-mine stuff. Scotland Yard and Mr. Bertie Horner, retired merchant, help the rural cops smash a pretty devilish outfit who "accidentally" murder men for pelf.

THE COLUMBINE CABIN MURDERS *by Philip Mechem* (Scribners)
A magnificent lodge in Colorado turned into a charnel-house because of a woman's faithlessness. The District Attorney comes a cropper but the local constable, aided and abetted by two young people, finally arrives at the truth.

MURDER AT LARGE *by Lesley Frost* (Coward, McCann)
Wholesale slaughter on a Long Island estate owned by a criminologist.

THE MAN WHO DIDN'T MIND HANGING *by Nancy Barr Mavity* (Doubleday, Doran)
Peter Piper, San Francisco news reporter, clears Chinese servant in startling murder case. Miss Mavity at her best.

THE HANGING OF CONSTANCE HILLIER *by S. Fowler Wright* (Macaulay)
Circumstantial evidence hangs an innocent woman but Inspector Cleveland of the C. I. D. evens the score. A carefully plotted mystery.

THE FIVE FRAGMENTS *by George Dyer* (Houghton Mifflin)
Murder of two San Francisco society girls solved by prominent lawyer at a dinner party. Cleverly conceived.

SEVEN MURDERS *by Robert Harold May* (Macaulay)
A cross section of a gang-ridden city with its full panoply of grafting politicians. An innocent girl is indirectly responsible for seven deaths.

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AT A GLANCE

Biography

ANDRÉ MAUROIS *by David Glass Larg* (OXFORD. $1.50)

THE *Modern Writers Series*, edited by Thomas Moult, is a series of biographical sketches projected through a rhetoric both discursive and impressionistic. This is the third book to be published in it. There is little exposition and no close etching, the method used being mainly that of psychography through incident. M. Maurois offers for the present volume a particularly engaging subject, and the author, despite the difficulties of emphasis implicit in his method, has done a serviceable job.

THE LIFE OF GEORGE ELIOT *by Emilie and Georges Romieu* (DUTTON. $3.75)

WE have heard a great deal about George Eliot of late and here are two French authors rushing in to add one more "life" to the list. Not a great deal can be said for the present book. There is little strength in its portrayal, either in point of presentation or in point of observation; and the writing is not of the best.

THE LAIRD OF ABBOTSFORD *by Dame Una Pope-Hennessy* (PUTNAM. $3.50)

THIS is an unpretentious life of Scott in three hundred pages. It is briskly written and well-informed throughout. The author is an accomplished Englishwoman who modestly disclaims all "definitive" results. She has borrowed largely from Lockhart but she has likewise been able through added study to supplement and correct many of the deductions drawn by that biographer. Not until Professor Grierson has completed his present task of editing Scott's letters and not before the Abbotsford Papers have been properly tabulated and studied can we have a definitive biography of Sir Walter Scott. Meanwhile this book will be (and for that matter should always provide) a happy biographical compendium for all Scott-lovers.

SAINTE-BEUVE: A LITERARY PORTRAIT *by William Frederick Giese* (UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN PRESS. $2.00)

THIS volume on Sainte-Beuve (Number 31 in the *University of Wisconsin Studies in Language and Literature*) is a closely written study of the chief continental critic of the nineteenth century. The book is subtitled "a literary portrait", and we find the whole career of its subject discussed with competence and charm. Sainte-Beuve's development as a critic, his relationship to the Romantic Movement, and the multiple rôles which he assumed—including those of scholar, poet, novelist, moralist, and historian—receive from Professor Giese a skilfull and informed treatment. A fine contribution to the critical library.

THE TUDOR WENCH *by Elswyth Thane* (BREWER, WARREN & PUTNAM. $3.50)

ALTHOUGH much research has manifestly gone into the making of this book, the style is that of a popular novel. Conversations, episodes, backgrounds, and characterizations come from a writer whose romantic prepossessions approximate those of Dumas. The general effect of the narrative is sufficiently agreeable to warrant notice.

VOLTAIRE *by André Maurois* (APPLETON. $2.00)

THIS is one of the *Appleton Biographies*, a series in which eight books have so far appeared. The present volume is of interest not only because of its subject but also because of the author selected for it. M. Maurois possesses a rare gift

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for biography and in the present instance shows no remission from the standards he has so long set himself and has so consistently achieved. The book runs to but 140 pages. Since the subject is large and the treatment is short there is a brevity of line and episode and a pungency and swiftness of characterization that make the book particularly readable.

IT REALLY HAPPENED *by Catherine, Princess Radziwill* (DIAL PRESS. $3.00)

IT IS doubtless a natural reaction against the suffering of both relative and absolute poverty, that the Princess Radziwill should write of her more powerful and prosperous years with the fervor and extravagance of a poet composing folk-tales. The greatness and perfection with which she endows the life and people around her before the Russian Revolution can hardly impress the unbiased reader as deeply as the later period of her career—which is treated with more realism. There is much that is moving in this volume. There is comedy, also; and a tragic patience which makes itself felt in spite of the numberless superlatives which obscure the truth in earlier pages.

A PRINCESS IN EXILE *by Marie, Grand Duchess of Russia* (VIKING. $3.50)

ENDOWED with an adventurous sense of reality, a brave heart, and a longing to serve as well as to be served, the Grand Duchess Marie, who here gives us her second volume of memoirs, has employed overwhelming adversity as a means to final triumph. It is her struggle toward clearness of vision, above all toward self-sufficiency, that invigorates this book. There is pathos without pettiness, tragedy without debasement. Among the chronicles of character-testing, of soul-searching, of self-discipline, there can be few in the range of autobiographical literature to equal this.

The principal episodes of the years included in this volume are set in the capitals of the world—Bucharest, Paris, London, New York. The *mise-en-scène* is as varied as the characters in the drama; and the latter embrace the social scale from top to bottom. The thoughtfulness and generosity of the rulers of Roumania stand in contrast with the rapacity of commercial people in Paris; the rise and fall of the embroidery enterprise known as "Kitmir" constitute no mean review of human qualities both good and bad.

History

THE LEGACY OF ALEXANDER *by Max Cary* (DIAL PRESS. $4.00)

THIS third volume of the Dial Press History of the Greek and Roman World is an attempt to summarize all that is now known of the Greek Hellenistic Age—the period, that is, between the death of Alexander the Great and Rome's final conquest of Greece. Formerly neglected by historians, this period has in the last forty years been subjected increasingly to research. With the growing body of knowledge it has come into view as a much more important precinct of historical study than it was once considered. One is therefore disappointed to discover *The Legacy of Alexander* to be little more than a very routine assembling of the facts into neat compartments. In one set of compartments the political chronicle, consisting chiefly of dreary warring, is treated by monarchies *seriatim*; in another, various non-political aspects of the time are catalogued and discussed. Little attempt to select from the available facts is evident. The resultant picture of the period lacks character, continuity, and any sense of trend, and the style suffers from concessions to popular taste. As a reference source for facts of the period this book can hardly surpass the more complete and better organized *Cambridge Ancient History*.

GREEK BYWAYS *by T. R. Glover* (MACMILLAN. $2.50)

THIS group of unconnected essays treats various subjects of minor interest in ancient Greek history—from speculations on the influence of diet to a consideration of the importance of daemonology in the Greek outlook—subjects that in our history courses are usually relegated to the category of "supplementary readings". Much as these essays might supplement by vivifying the study of history's main themes, they are also

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highly interesting in themselves, not only for their curiosity value but for their bearing on life today. The author has done them from a background of very evident familiarity with the classic writers, on whom he draws heavily for quotation and reference. They are written in a style that, though it perhaps betrays too great an aspiration toward fine writing, yet is readable, if one can tide himself over the constant digressions.

SAPPHO OF LESBOS *by Arthur Weigall* (STOKES. $3.00)

A CAREFULLY documented history, for readers who do not know Greek, of the life-span of Sappho. All the places, both on the mainland and in the islands, which she is supposed to have visited or which affected her destiny are described by an ingenious synthesis of ancient comment and the author's own observation. There is much interesting detail about food, clothes, and living conditions. Translations of the fragments are generously scattered through the text.

GAY COURT LIFE *by Lucienne Ercole* (HARPERS. $3.50)

THIS depressing book takes up in detail the arts of dress and decoration and the manners and morals of the Court of France from the death of Louis XIV to the calling of the Estates General. It is appropriately illustrated. The translation is very bad.

DIARY OF A SCOTCH GARDENER *by Thomas Blaikie* (DUTTON. $3.50)

TO ALL connoisseurs of character as shown in diaries we heartily recommend the intrepid Thomas Blaikie, whom neither avalanche nor revolution could more than momentarily divert from his passion for plants. From April 1775, when he set off to botanize in Switzerland, the diary extends through his employment as landscape gardener for the Comte de Lauraguais, the Comte d'Artois, Philippe Egalité, and other aristocrats to the tenth of August, 1792. He is an acute observer, both of landscape and of the luxury and misery of the people; he was deservedly popular with all ranks; he describes his own misadventures with sardonic humour, and speaks as an indignant eye-witness of some of the most turbulent scenes of the early revolution, which he happily survived. The diary is edited by Francis Birrell, and well illustrated.

COLONIAL AMERICANS IN EXILE *by A. G. Bradley* (DUTTON. $3.75)

MR. BRADLEY is an Englishman who for almost half a century has been writing books celebrating the glory of his country. Such activity is natural; and in these days of degenerate and indiscriminate self-criticism, it is refreshing; but it is not likely to produce historical works of the highest rank. The present volume deals with the vicissitudes, trials, and tribulations of that class in the North American colonies who called themselves Loyalists, but whom we still call "Tories". It traces their interesting history from the time of the French and Indian Wars to the end of the War of 1812, which found their largest single groups settled under British sovereignty in Canada. Mr. Bradley's uncritical admiration for everything British is unfortunately as misleading as the uncritical admiration for everything American so common in some of our own school textbooks, and it vitiates much of his work in the compilation of this volume. What merit the book possesses lies largely in the fact that it may call the attention of the reader to a neglected chapter in the history of British North America.

Topics of the Day

THE ROAD TO THE LAW *by Dudley Cammett Lunt* (WHITTLESEY HOUSE. $2.50)

MR. LUNT attempts to do for the law what Dr. Logan Clendening did so brilliantly a few years ago for the medical profession. Though lacking the literary skill of the other, the author has written a book admirable in scope and clarity. Under the headings of Acquisition, Use, Protection, Disposition, and Legal Education he presents the main principles of the law as we find it today. He is lavish in his citation and dramatization of cases drawn from English and

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American courts. He is painstaking in his exposition of legal phraseology, what it means and how it came to be that way. His effort to show the laymen that "law is a living thing and not, as tradition would have it, a dry-as-dust affair" is more than slightly successful, and the interesting paths he follows back through the common law will be an education to many and perhaps a warning to some.

OUR WONDERLAND OF BUREAUCRACY *by James M. Beck* (MACMILLAN. $3.00)

THIS is a qualified commentator's description of the evil ways of our Federal bureaucracy. It is concise for a subject of great scope and brisk in style. The Department of Agriculture, to take one of many examples, began in 1839 with an appropriation of $1000 to collect agricultural statistics; its appropriation for the fiscal year 1932 was $247,283,130. Such things are heartening to bureaucrats, because each of them would like to swallow everything, but ordinary taxpayers may react differently.

THROUGH THE COMMUNIST LOOKING-GLASS *by Harry Stekoll* (BREWER, WARREN & PUTNAM. $2.50)

A PLAIN—and, judged from his writing, typical—American business man takes a trip to Russia. What makes his viewpoint especially interesting is the fact that until he was eighteen he was himself a Russian, an active member of the Social Revolutionist Party, concerned with bombs and suffering imprisonment. His knowledge of the language enabled him to learn more than his "Intourist" party was officially told. He is fair, shrewd, not too intelligent.

SIDELIGHTS *by G. K. Chesterton* (DODD, MEAD. $2.50)

G. K. HAS brought out another volume of collected essays. That fact alone will suffice as review both for those who do and those who do not like the works of Bernard Shaw's Best Friend and Worst Enemy. It may be added that the present contains rather more American essays than previous collections, and that most of G. K.'s views on our country at least possess his usual merits of originality and intelligence, though they perhaps take too seriously the Mencken-Sinclair Lewis school of American social criticism.

Criticism

POETRY AND CRITICISM OF THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT *by Campbell, Pyre, and Weaver* (CROFTS. $3.50)

THE purpose of this book as set forth in its preface is to afford those "materials most useful for the understanding of the literature of the early nineteenth century" as well as "materials for that kind of comparative criticism which will make possible a scholarly and satisfying knowledge of the Romantic Movement". A series of selections from Coleridge, Wordsworth, Scott, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Hazlitt, Hunt, and De Quincey is given, each series being preceded by a short sketch of the author's life with a brief bibliography. There is in addition a concluding section on the "Critical Reviews of the Nineteenth Century". This book, which must be viewed primarily as a text, seems to offer ampler materials and to be better edited than most books having the same general purpose.

A GUIDE TO THE BEST FICTION *by E. A. Baker and James Packman* (MACMILLAN. $9.00)

WE now have the third edition of a useful work first published in 1903 by E. A. Baker, Director of the School of Librarianship in the University of London. It was revised by him in 1913. Mr. Baker has divided his task in the present volume with Mr. James Packman, a scholar of University College. The object of the work as set forth in the preface is "to supply as complete a list as might be of the most notable prose fiction in English, with as much characterization of the contents, nature, and style of each book as would go into a few lines of print". The book represents years of thorough study and careful compilation and should be an invaluable aid to librarians, editors, and all serious students of fiction.

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Verse

POEMS *by George Villiers* (OXFORD. $1.75)

MR. VILLIERS' small volume has two main themes, childhood and grief, and of both he writes well—with an unclouded mysticism that has its root in fundamental security, with fastidious grace, with tenderness and humour.

NEW POEMS *by William Cowper* (OXFORD. $0.75)

A PAMPHLET of six poems recently discovered in manuscript, including a paraphrase of Psalm 114, a translated epigram, a priggish "Hymn for a child that has ungodly parents", a dutiful "On the King's happy escape from assassination", a political satire *"Cum ratione insanire"*, and a stinging apologue of a scholar who called up the devil. There is also an anonymous broadside song, attributed to Cowper, in praise of toryism, to the tune of "How happy could I be with either".

Miscellaneous

BEAUTY OF FLIGHT *by Manfred Curry* (DAY. $5.00)

IN *A Rabbit in the Air* Mr. David Garnett recently gave us in beautiful prose a record of what the airman feels; in this book Dr. Curry has given us in equally beautiful pictures a record of what the airman sees. One hundred aerial photographs (selected, say the publishers, from some 10,000) are reproduced: landscapes, seascapes, and cloudscapes from nearly every section of the earth. A page is devoted to each picture, and there is no text. Although the book has been printed in Germany, it is a picture album of the old style rather than a kinetic picture-story of the new. The quiet and awesome beauty of these unrelated photographs, however, is ample justification for their collection and publication. One regrets only that the illustrations are uncaptioned (the sole descriptive material is relegated to a table of contents) and that the publishers estimated their potential sales so low as to feel obliged to price the book at five dollars.

ISLAND GIRLS I LOVED *by Bassigny Gerrard* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $3.50)

MR. GERRARD speaks with great conviction and eloquence on the subject of his amatory adventures with South Sea Island girls. Without being quite as outspoken as the late Frank Harris, he nevertheless manages to create an erotic atmosphere tropical in temperature. Where other writers have been content to deal in scenery, climate, and anthropological lore, our author has concerned himself with seduction (not very difficult in those parts) and the fruits thereof. Most of his campaign was carried on in Bora Bora, one of the less well-known islands of the Leeward Group. It was there and on a small neighbouring island that Murnau's *Tabu* was filmed, and some of the actors in the picture figure in this narrative. An interesting book for those who wish their erotic literature lyrical, exotic, and detailed but not vulgar.

IN SEARCH OF THE ANTIQUE *by Thomas Rohan* (DIAL PRESS. $3.50)

FOR many years himself a dealer in England, Mr. Rohan writes of the old and the beautiful with affection, discrimination, and a refreshingly lively professional conscience. He has already given us two delightful volumes of reminiscences, *The Confessions of a Dealer* and *Old Beautiful*. This volume is a sequel to the latter; like *Old Beautiful*, it is full of pointed anecdote, casual information, and gentle wisdom.

MACHETE *by Charles Merriam* (SOUTHWEST PRESS. $2.00)

AN American on a Mexican sugar plantation in Tehuantepec is made doctor by acclaim. His straightforward account of his own and others' experiences is authentic and exciting.

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